This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE

Digitized by Google

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
DAVIS

Digitized by Google

J. B. Parish

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

VOL. XLI.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

VOL. XLI.

JANUARY TO JUNE, 1880.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE.

1880.

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
DAVIS

Digitized by Google

[*The right of Publishing Translations of Articles in this Magazine is reserved.*]

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS OF VOLUME XLI.

White Wings: A Yachting Romance.

			PAGE
Chapter	XX.	Chasing a Thunderstorm	1
"	XXI.	Chasing Seals	7
"	XXII.	"Uncertain, Coy, and Hard to Please"	14
"	XXIII.	Secret Schemes	239
"	XXIV.	Before Breakfast	245
"	XXV.	A Protector	251
"	XXVI.	"Mary, Mary!"	257
"	XXVII.	An Unspoken Appeal	263
"	XXVIII.	His Lordship	271
"	XXIX.	The Laird's Plans	494
"	XXX.	A Sunday in Far Solitudes	500
"	XXXI.	Hidden Springs	506
"	XXXII.	A Confession	513
"	XXXIII.	Only a Headache	519
"	XXXIV.	In the Dark	526
"	XXXV.	To absent Friends!	742
"	XXXVI.	Suspicions	749
"	XXXVII.	Certainty	754

Mademoiselle de Mersac.

Chapter	XXXI.	Jeanne is shown the Scenery of Surrey	104
"	XXXII.	In which Barrington does a great Deal of Talking	112
"	XXXIII.	On the March	121
"	XXXIV.	Bedford Square	129
"	XXXV.	In which Barrington displays much Tact	141
"	XXXVI.	Miss Barrington's Patience is tried	355
"	XXXVII.	By the Lake of Geneva	365
"	XXXVIII.	In which all Jeanne's Troubles are dispersed	375
"	XXXIX.	Conclusion	382

Washington Square. By Henry James, Jr. Chapters I.—VI. 641

Adelcrants, The Countess 51
A New Study of Tennyson 36
Arcadian Revenge, An. By James Payn 164

Digitized by Google

PAGE

A Seat in the House 604
Austin, Mrs. I.—V. 385, 615
A Visit to Hinba 171

Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" 475

Cabinet-making 735
Captain Ortis' Booty. A Ballad. By A. Mary F. Robinson 612
Chippers of Flint 189
"Cook's Oracle, The" 723
Cottagers and Cottages 683
Countess Adelcrantz, The 51

Drawing-rooms, The Philosophy of 312

Eppelein von Gailingen 452
Eyrbyggja Saga, The 712

Farmers and Farms 337
Fighting Fitzgerald 82
Flint, Chippers of 189
From the Cradle. By Frederick Locker 531

Ghuznee, The Siege of. An Episode of the first Afghan War 201

Hinba, A Visit to 171
How a Chinese B.A. was won 589

Illusions of Memory 416
Indian People, What the English have done for the. In two Chapters. By W. W. Hunter, LL.D. 21, 152

Klopstock 532

London Walks 222
Love the Betrayer 335

Marius Bougeard's Amnesty. The Story of One Good Turn and Another 571
Memory, Illusions of 416
"Merchant of Venice," The Story of the. By James Spedding 276
Molière's Acting Manager 434
Mrs. Austin. I.—V. 385, 615
Musicians, Plea for 547
My Baby or My Dog 181

New Lamps for Old Ones 96

Palingenesis. By Edmund W. Gosse 491
Pilgrimage to Vallauris 557
Plea for Musicians 547

Digitized by Google

AGE

Regicides of this Century 467
Revenge, An Arcadian. By James Payn 164

Siege of Ghuznee. An Episode of the first Afghan War 201

Tennyson, A New Study of 36
"The Cook's Oracle" 723
The Countess Adelcrantz 51
The Eyrbyggja Saga 712
The Guinea Box. In Two Chapters. By James Payn 699
The Philosophy of Drawing-rooms 312
The Regicides of this Century 467
The Siege of Ghuznee. An Episode of the first Afghan War 201
The Story of the "Merchant of Venice." By James Spedding 276
Thoreau, Henry David: His Character and Opinions 665

Vallauris, A Pilgrimage to 557
Visions. From the Russian of Tourguéneff 290
Visit to Hinba, A 171

What the English have done for the Indian People. In Two Chapters. By W. W. Hunter, LL.D. 21, 152

Yoshida-Torajiro 327

Digitized by Google

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

TO FACE PAGE

There appeared two shining black heads on the still water 1

Jeanne is shown the scenery of Surrey 104

"Way to where?" 129

"Mr. Smith was so kind as to bring me a cup of tea" 239

"He would have me put cartridges in my gun, even before we left the road 257

And there her eyes rested longest 355

And then in a moment all was changed 385

Here and there we tried to brush the weeds away 494

"But if she says, 'Yes?'" 513

Honestly, it was not a beautiful scene 615

Marian Almond came up to Catherine, in company with a tall young man 641

The ladies produced their knitting materials 742

Digitized by Google

An Article upon the Siege of Ghuznee appeared in the 'Cornhill Magazine' for February. The Editor received it from Captain C. B. Norman, late of H.M. Bengal Staff Corps, with the assurance that it was founded upon a diary kept by his uncle, 'who was a captive in Ghuznee during the first Afghan war.' Captain Norman's position was such as to warrant the Editor in accepting this statement without hesitation.

Major-General Charles Harris, of H.M. Bengal Staff Corps, has recently satisfied the Editor that the Article was in great measure founded upon a diary kept by himself during the siege, and has explained the circumstances under which the diary came into the possession of Captain Norman, who used it without the knowledge or consent of the Author.

The Editor inserts this statement at General Harris's request.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THERE APPEARED TWO SHINING BLACK HEADS ON THE STILL WATER.

Digitized by Google

THE

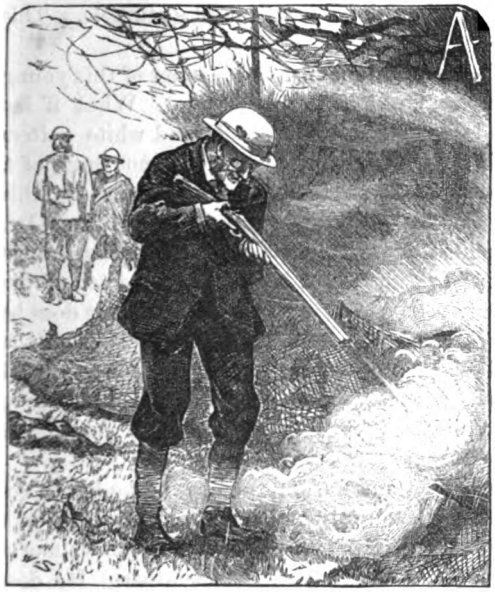
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1880.

White Wings: A Yachting Romance.

CHAPTER XX.

Chasing a Thunderstorm.



"*ALL on board, then—all on board!*" the summons comes ringing through the wonder-land of dreams. And then, amid the general hurry and scurry throughout the house, certain half-bewildered people turn first of all to the windows of their rooms: a welcome sight! The glory of the summer dawn is shining over the mountains; the *White Dove*, with nearly all her sail set, is swinging there at her moorings; best of all, a strong breeze—apparently from the north-east—is ruffling the dark blue seas and driving a line of white surf on the further shores. The news comes that Master Fred, by darting about in the dingy since ever daylight began, has got the very last basket on board; the red caps

Digitized by Google

are even now bringing the gig in to the landing slip; John of Skye is all impatience to take advantage of the favourable wind. There is but little time lost; the happy-go-lucky procession—*dona ferentes*—set out for the beach. And if the Laird is pleased to find his nephew apparently falling into his scheme with a good grace; and if the nephew thinks he is very lucky to get so easily out of an awkward predicament; and if Mary Avon—unconscious of these secret designs—is full of an eager delight at the prospect of being allowed to set to work again—may not all this account for a certain indecorous gaiety that startles the silence of the summer morning? Or is it that mythical hero Homesh who is responsible for this laughter? We hear the Laird chuckling; we notice the facetious wrinkles about his eyes; we make sure it must be Homesh. Then the final consignment of books, shawls, gun-cases, and what not is tossed into the gig; and away we go, with the measured dash of the oars.

And what does the bearded John of Skye think of the new hand we have brought him? Has he his own suspicions? Is his friend and sworn ally, Dr. Sutherland, to be betrayed and supplanted in his absence?

"Good morning, sir," he says obediently, at the gangway; and the quick Celtic eyes glance at Howard Smith from top to toe.

"Good morning, captain," the young man says lightly; and he springs too quickly up the steps, making a little bit of a stumble. This is not an auspicious omen.

Then on deck: the handsome figure and pleasant manner of this young man ought surely to prepossess people in his favour. What if his tightly-fitting garments and his patent-leather boots and white gaiters are not an orthodox yachting rig? John of Skye would not judge of a man by his costume. And if he does not seem quite at home—in this first look round—everyone is not so familiar with boating life as Dr. Sutherland. It is true, an umbrella used as a walking-stick looks strange on board a yacht; and he need not have put it on the curved top of the companion, for it immediately rolls over into the scuppers. Nor does he seem to see the wickedness of placing a heavy bundle of canvases on the raised skylight of the ladies' cabin; does he want to start the glass? Dr. Sutherland, now, would have given the men a hand in hauling up the gig. Dr. Sutherland would not have been in the way of the tiller, as the yacht is released from her moorings.

Unaware of this rapid criticism, and unconcerned by all the bustle going on around, our new friend is carelessly and cheerfully chatting with his hostess; admiring the yacht; praising the beauty of the summer morning; delighted with the prospect of sailing in such weather. He does not share in the profound curiosity of his uncle about the various duties of the men. When John of Skye, wishing to leave the tiller for a minute, to overhaul the lee tackle, turns quite naturally to Mary Avon, who is standing by him, and says with a grin of apology, "If ye please,

Digitized by Google

mem," the young man betrays but little surprise that this young lady should be entrusted with the command of the vessel.

"What!" he says, with a pleasant smile—they seem on very friendly terms already—"can you steer, Miss Avon? Mind you don't run us against any rocks."

Miss Avon has her eye on the mainsail. She answers, with a business-like air—

"Oh, there is no fear of that. What I have to mind, with this wind, is not to let her gybe, or I should get into disgrace."

"Then I hope you won't let her gybe, whatever that is," said he with a laugh.

Never was any setting-out more auspicious. We seemed to have bade farewell to those perpetual calms. Early as it was in the morning, there was no still, dream-like haze about the mountains; there was a clear greenish-yellow where the sunlight struck them; the great slopes were dappled with the shadows of purple-brown; further away the tall peaks were of a decided blue. And then the windy, fresh, brisk morning; the *White Dove* running races with the driven seas; the white foam flying away from her sides. John of Skye seemed to have no fear of this gentle skipper. He remained forward, superintending the setting of the topsail; the *White Dove* was to "have it" while the fresh breeze continued to blow.

And still the squally north-easter bears her bravely onward, the puffs darkening the water as they pass us and strike the rushing seas. Is that a shadow of Colonsay on the far southern horizon? The lighthouse people here have gone to bed; there is not a single figure along the yellow-white walls. Look at the clouds of gulls on the rocks, resting after their morning meal. By this time the deer have retreated into the high slopes above Craignure; there is a white foam breaking along the bay of Innismore. And still the *White Dove* spins along, with foam-diamonds glittering in the sunlight at her bows; and we hear the calling of the sea-swallows, and the throbbing of a steamer somewhere in among the shadows of Loch Aline. Surely now we are out of the reign of calms; the great boom strains at the sheets; there is a whirl of blue waters; the *White Dove* has spread her wings at last.

"Ay, ay," says John of Skye, who has relieved Miss Avon at the helm; "it is a great peety."

"Why, John?" says she, with some surprise; is he vexed that we should be sailing well on this fine sailing day?

"It iss a great peety that Mr. Sutherland not here," said John, "and he wass know so much about a yacht, and day after day not a breeze at ahl. There iss not many chentlemen will know so much about a yacht as Mr. Sutherland."

Miss Avon did not answer, though her face seemed conscious in its colour. She was deeply engaged in a novel.

"Oh, that is the Mr. Sutherland who has been with you," said

Digitized by Google

Howard Smith to his hostess, in a cheerful way. "A doctor, I think you said?"

At this Miss Avon looked up quickly from her book.

"I should have thought," said she with a certain dignity of manner, "that most people had heard of Dr. Angus Sutherland."

"Oh, yes, no doubt," said he, in the most good-natured fashion. "I know about him myself—it must be the same man. A nephew of Lord Foyers, isn't he? I met some friends of his at a house last winter; they had his book with them—the book about tiger-hunting in Nepaul, don't you know?—very interesting indeed it was, uncommonly interesting. I read it right through one night when everybody else was in bed——"

"Why, that is Captain Sutherland's book," said his hostess, with just a trace of annoyance. "They are not even related. How can you imagine that Angus Sutherland would write a book about tiger-hunting?—he is one of the most distinguished men of science in England."

"Oh, indeed," says the young man, with the most imperturbable good humour. "Oh, yes, I am sure I have heard of him—the Geographical Society, or something like that; really those evenings are most amusing. The women are awfully bored, and yet they do keep their eyes open somehow. But about those Indian fellows; it was only last winter that I heard how the —— —— manages to make those enormous bags, all to his own gun, that you see in the papers. Haven't you noticed them?"

Well, some of us had been struck with amazement by the reports of the enormous slaughter committed by a certain Indian prince; and had wondered at one of the gentle natives of the East taking so thoroughly and successfully to our robust English sports.

"Why," said this young man, "he has every covert laid out with netting, in small squares like a dice-board; and when he has done blazing away in the air, the under-keepers come up and catch every pheasant, hare, and rabbit that has run into the netting, and kill them, and put them down to his bag. Ingenious, isn't it? But I'll tell you what I have seen myself. I have seen Lord Justice —— deliberately walk down a line of netting and shoot every pheasant and rabbit that had got entangled. 'Safer not to let them get away,' says he. And when his host came up he said, 'Very good shooting; capital. I have got four pheasants and seven rabbits there; I suppose the beaters will pick them up.'"

And so the Youth, as we had got to call him, rattled on, relating his personal experiences, and telling such stories as occurred to him. There was a good sprinkling of well-known names in this desultory talk; how could Miss Avon fail to be interested, even if the subject-matter was chiefly composed of pheasant-shooting, private theatricals, billiard matches on wet days, and the other amusements of country life?

The Laird, when he did turn aside from that huge volume of *Muni-*

Digitized by Google

cipal London—which he had brought with him for purposes of edification—must have seen and approved. If the young man's attentions to Mary Avon were of a distinctly friendly sort, if they were characterised by an obvious frankness, if they were quite as much at the disposal of Mr. Smith's hostess, what more could be expected? Rome was not built in a day. Meanwhile Miss Avon seemed very well pleased with her new companion.

And if it may have occurred to one or other of us that Howard Smith's talking, however pleasant and good-natured and bright, was on a somewhat lower level than that of another of our friends, what then? Was it not better fitted for idle sailing among summer seas? Now, indeed, our good friend the Laird had no need to fear being startled by the sudden propounding of conundrums.

He was startled by something else. Coming up from luncheon, we found that an extraordinary darkness prevailed in the western heavens—a strange bronze-purple gloom that seemed to contain within it the promise of a hundred thunderstorms. And as this fair wind had now brought us within sight of the open Atlantic, the question was whether we should make for Skye or run right under this lurid mass of cloud that appeared to lie all along the western shores of Mull. Unanimously the vote was for the latter course. Had not Angus Sutherland been anxious all along to witness a thunderstorm at sea? Might it not be of inestimable value to Miss Avon? John of Skye, not understanding these reasons, pointed out that the wind had backed somewhat to the north, and that Mull would give us surer shelter than Skye for the night. And so we bore away past Quinish, the brisk breeze sending the *White Dove* along in capital style; past the mouth of Loch Cuan; past the wild Cailleach Point; past the broad Calgary Bay; and past the long headland of Ru-Treshanish. It was a strange afternoon. The sun was hidden; but in the south and west there was a wan, clear, silver glow on the sea; and in this white light the islands of Lunga, and Fladda, and Staffa, and the Dutchman were of a sombre purple. Darker still were the islands lying towards the land—Gometra, and Ulva, and Inch Kenneth; while the great rampart of cliff from Loch-na-Keal to Loch Scridain was so wrapped in gloom that momentarily we watched for the first quivering flash of the lightning. Then the wind died away. The sea grew calm. On the glassy grey surface the first drops of the rain fell—striking black, and then widening out in small circles. We were glad of the cool rain, but the whispering of it sounded strangely in the silence.

Then, as we are still watching for the first silver-blue flash of the lightning, behold! the mighty black wall of the Bourg and Gribun cliffs slowly, mysteriously disappears; and there is only before us a vague mist of grey. Colonsay is gone; Inch Kenneth is gone; no longer can we make out the dark rocks of Erisgeir. And then the whispering of the sea increases; there is a deeper gloom overhead; the rain-king is upon us.

Digitized by Google

There is a hasty retreat downstairs; the hatches are shoved over; after dinner we shall see what this strange evening portends.

"I hope we shall get into the Sound of Ulva before dark," says Miss Avon.

"I wish Angus was on board. It is a shame he should be cheated out of his thunderstorm. But we shall have the equinoctials for him, at all events," says Queen Titania—just as if she had a series of squalls and tempests bottled, labelled, and put on a shelf.

When we get on deck again we find that the evening, but not the *White Dove*, has advanced. There is no wind; there is no rain; around us there is the silent, glassy, lilac-grey sea, which, far away in the west, has one or two gleams of a dull bronze on it, as if some afterglow were struggling through the clouds at the horizon. Along the Gribun cliffs, and over the islands, the gloom has surely increased; it were better if we were in some shelter for this night.

Then a noise is heard that seems to impose a sudden silence—thunder, low, distant, and rumbling. But there is no splendid gleam through the gathering gloom of the night: the Gribun cliffs have not spoken yet.

John of Skye has carelessly seated himself on one of the deck-stools; his arm hangs idly on the tiller; we guess, rather than hear, that he is regaling himself with the sad, monotonous *Farewell to Fuineray*. He has got on his black oilskins, though there is not a drop of rain.

By-and-by, however, he jumps to his feet, and appears to listen intently.

"Ay, do you hear it?" he says, with a short laugh. "And it is off the land it is coming!"

He calls aloud—

"Look out, boys! it is a squahl coming over, and we'll hev the topsail down whatever."

Then we hear a roaring in the dark; and presently the headsails are violently shaken, and the great boom swings over as John puts the helm up to get way on her. The next instant we are racing in for the land, as if we mean to challenge the heavy squall that is tearing across from the unseen Gribun cliffs. And now the rain-clouds break in deluges; the men in their black oilskins go staggering this way and that along the slippery decks; the *White Dove* is wrestling with the sudden storm; another low murmur of thunder comes booming through the darkness. What is that solitary light far in there towards the land?—dare any steamer venture so near the shore on such a night? And we, too; would it not be safer for us to turn and run out to sea rather than beat against a squall into the narrow and shallow channels of Ulva's Sound? But John of Skye is not afraid. The wind and sea cannot drown his strident voice; the rain deluge cannot blind the trained eyes; the men on the look-out—when the bow of the boat springs high on a wave, we

Digitized by Google

can see the black figures against the sombre sky—know the channels too; we are not afraid to make for Ulva's Sound.

There is a wild cry from one of the women; she has caught sight, through the gloom, of white foam dashing on the rocks.

"It is all right, mem!" John calls aloud, with a laugh; but all the same the order is shouted, "*Ready about!*"—"*Ready about!*" is the call coming back to us from the darkness. "*'Bout ship!*" and then away she sheers from that ugly coast.

We were after all cheated of our thunderstorm, but it was a wild and a wet night nevertheless. Taking in the mizen was no joke amid this fury of wind and rain, but that and the hauling up of the main-tack lessened the pressure on her. John of Skye was in high spirits. He was proud of his knowledge of the dangerous coast; where less familiar eyes saw only vague black masses looming out of the darkness he recognised every rock and headland.

"No, no, mem," he was calling out in friendly tones; "we not hef to run out to sea at ahl. We will get into the Sound of Ulva ferry well; and there will not be any better anchorage as the Sound of Ulva, when you are acquaint. But a stranger—I not ask a stranger to go into the Sound of Ulva on so dark a night."

What is this we hear?—"*Down foresail, boys!*"—and there is a rattle on to the decks. The head of the yacht seems to sway round; there is a loud flapping of sails. "*Down chub!*"—and there are black figures struggling up there at the bowsprit; but vaguely seen against the blackness of the sky and the sea. Then, in a second or two, there is a fiercer rattle than ever; the anchor is away with a roar. Some further chain is paid out; then a strange silence ensues; we are anchored in Ulva's Sound.

Come down into the cabin, then, you women-folk, and dry your streaming faces, and arrange your dishevelled hair. Is not this a wonderful stillness and silence after the whirl and roar of the storm outside? But then you must know that the waters are smooth in here; and the winds become gentle—as gentle as the name of the island that is close to us now in the dark. It is a green-shored island. The sailors call it *Ool-a-va.*

CHAPTER XXI.

CHASING SEALS.

NEXT morning found the Laird in a most excellent humour. All was going well. Though nothing had been said or promised by the Youth, was not his coming away with us into these remote solitudes—to say nothing of the very pleasant manner in which he sought to entertain Miss Mary Avon—sufficient evidence that he had at least no great repugnance to his uncle's scheme? The Laird was disposed to chuckle

Digitized by Google

privately over the anxiety that Mary displayed about her work. The poor young thing: she did not understand what higher powers were ordering her future for her.

"Let her work on," the Laird said, in great confidence, to his hostess, and there was a fine secret humour in his eyes. "Ay, ay, let her work on: hard work never harmed anybody. And if she brings her bit mailin to the marriage—ye would call it her dowry in the south—in the shape of a bundle of pictures—just as a young Scotch lass brings a chest of drawers or a set of napery—she will not be empty-handed. She can hang them up herself at Denny-mains."

"You are looking too far ahead, sir," says Queen T., with a quiet smile.

"Maybe—maybe," says the Laird, rubbing his hands with a certain proud satisfaction. "We'll see who's right—we will see who is right, ma'am."

Then, at breakfast, he was merry, complaisant, philosophical in turns. He told us that the last vidimus of the affairs of the Burgh of Strathgovan was most satisfactory: assets about 35,000*l.*; liabilities not over 20,000*l.*; there was thus an estimated surplus of no less than 15,000*l.* Why, then, he asked, should certain poor creatures on the Finance Committee make such a work about the merest trifles? Life was not given to man that he should worry himself into a rage about a penny farthing.

"There is a great dale of right down common sense, ma'am," said he. "in that verse that was written by my countryman, Welliam Dunbaur—

Be merry man, and tak not sair in mind
  The wavering of this wretched world of sorrow;
To God be humble, to thy friend be kind,
  And with thy neighbours gladly lend and borrow;
His chance to-night, it may be thine to-morrow;
  Be blythe in heart for any aventúre,
For oft with wise men it has been said aforow,
  Without Gladnésse availeth no Treasúre."

But we, who were in the secret, knew that this quotation had nothing in the world to do with the Finance Committee of Strathgovan. The Laird had been comforting himself with these lines. They were a sort of philosophico-poetical justification of himself to himself for his readiness to make these two young people happy by giving up to them Denny-mains.

And no doubt he was still chuckling over the simplicity of this poor girl, when, after breakfast, he found her busily engaged in getting her painting materials on deck.

"Beautiful—beautiful," said he, glancing around. "Ye will make a fine picture out of those mountains, and the mist, and the still sea. What an extraordinary quiet after last night's rain!"

And perhaps he was thinking how well this picture would look in the dining-room at Denny-mains; and how a certain young hostess—no

Digitized by Google

longer pale and fragile, but robust and sun-browned with much driving in a pony-carriage—would take her friends to the picture, and show them Ulva, and Loch-na-Keal, and Ben-More; and tell them how this strange quiet and beauty had followed on a wild night of storm and rain. The world around us was at this moment so quiet that we could hear the twittering of some small bird among the rocks in there at the shore. And the pale, wan, dream-like sea was so perfect a mirror that an absolutely double picture was produced—of the gloomy mountain-masses of Ben-More, amid silver gleams of cloud and motionless wreaths of mist; of the basaltic pillars of the coast nearer at hand—a pale reddish-brown, with here and there a scant sprinkling of grass; of that broad belt of rich orange-yellow seaweed that ran all along the rocks, marking the junction of the world of the land with the water-world below. An absolutely perfect mirror; except when some fish splashed; then the small circles widened out and gradually disappeared; and the surface was as glassy as before.

The Laird was generous. He would leave the artist undisturbed at her work. Would not his nephew be better amused if a bachelor expedition were fitted out to go in search of the seals that abound in the channels around Inch Kenneth? Our hostess declined to go; but provided us with an ample lunch. The gig was lowered; and everything ready for the start.

"Bring your shot-gun, too, Howard," said the Laird. "I want ye to shoot some skarts. I am told that the breasts of them are very close and fine in the feathers; and I would like a muff or a bag made of them for a leddy—for a young leddy."

Mary Avon was busy with her work: how could she hear?

"And if the skin of the seals about here is not very fine, we will make something of it. Oh, ay, we will make something of it in the way of a present. I know a man in Glasgow who is extraordinary clever at such things."

"We have first to get the seal, uncle," said his nephew, laughing. "I know any number of men who assure you they have shot seals; but not quite so many who have got the seals that were shot."

"Oh, but we'll get the seal, and the skarts, too," said the Laird; and then he added, grimly, "Man, if ye cannot do that, what can ye do? If ye cannot shoot well, what else are ye fit for?"

"I really don't know, uncle," the Youth confessed modestly, as he handed down his rifle into the gig. "The London solicitors are a blind race. If they only knew what a treasure of learning and sound judgment they might have for the asking: but they don't. And I can't get any of the Scotch business you were talking about; because my name doesn't begin with Mac."

"Well, well, we must wait, and hope for the best," said the Laird cheerfully, as he took his seat in the stern of the gig. "We are not likely to run against a solicitor in the Sound of Ulva. Sufficient for the

Digitized by Google

day. As I was saying, there's great common sense in what Welliam Dunbaur wrote—

> Be blythe in heart for any aventúre,
> For oft with wise men it has been said aforow,
> Without Gladnésse availeth no Treasúre.

—Bless me, look at that!"

This sudden exclamation sent all eyes to the shore. A large heron, startled by the rattling of the oars, had risen, with a sharp and loud croak of alarm, from among the sea-weed, his legs hanging down, his long neck, and wings, and body apparently a grey-white against the shadow of the basaltic rocks. Then, lazily flapping, he rose higher and higher; he tucked up his legs; the great wings went somewhat more swiftly; and then, getting above the low cliffs, and appearing quite black against the silver-clear sky, he slowly sailed away.

The silence of this dream-like picture around us was soon broken. As the men pulled away from the yacht, the lonely shores seemed to waken up into life; and there were whistlings, and callings, and warnings all along the cliffs; while the startled sea-birds whirred by in flashes of colour, or slowly and heavily betook themselves to some further promontory. And now, as we passed along the narrow Sound, and saw through the translucent water the wonder-land of seaweed below—with the patches of clear yellow sand intervening—we appreciated more and more highly the skill of John of Skye in getting us into such a harbour on the previous night. It is not everyone who, in pitch darkness and in the midst of squalls, can run a yacht into the neck of a bottle.

We emerged from the narrow channel, and got out into the open; but even the broad waters of Loch-na-Keal were pale and still: the reflection of Eorsa was scarcely marred by a ripple. The long, measured throb of the rowing was the only sound of life in this world of still water and overhanging cloud. There was no stroke-oar now to give the chorus

> *A long strong pull together,*
> *Ho, ro, clansmen.*

But still we made good way. As we got further out, we came in sight of Colonsay; and further off still, Staffa, lying like a dark cloud on the grey sea. Inch Kenneth, for which we were making, seemed almost black; although, among the mists that lay along the Gribun and Bourg cliffs, there was a dull silver-yellow light, as though some sunlight had got mixed up with the clouds.

"No, no," the Laird was saying, as he studied a scrap of paper, "it is not a great property to admeenister; but I am strong in favour of local management. After reading that book on London, and its catalogue of the enormous properties there, our little bit Burgh appears to be only a toy; but the principle of sound and energetic self-government is the same. And yet it is no so small, mind ye. The Burgh buildings are estimated at nineteen thousand pounds odd; the furniture at twelve hunderd pounds; lamps near on two thousand five hunderd; sewers nine

Digitized by Google

thousand pounds odd; and then debts not far from three thousand pounds—that makes our assets just about thirty-five thousand. And if the water-pipes in some places are rather too small for the steam fire-engine, we maun have them bigger. It was quite rideeculous that a thriving place like Strathgovan, when there was a big fire, should have to run to Glesca for help. No, no; I believe in independence; and if ye should ever live in our neighbourhood, Howard, I hope ye will stand out against the policy of annexation. It is only a lot o' Radical bodies that are for upsetting institutions that have been tried by time and not found wanting."

"Oh, certainly, sir," Howard Smith said blithely. "When you educate people to take an interest in small parochial matters, they are better fitted to give an opinion about the general affairs of the country."

"Small?" said the Laird, eyeing him severely. "They are of as much importance as human life; is there anything of greater importance in the world? By abolishin' the Bigginsburn nuisance, and insisting on greater cleanliness and ventilation we have reduced the number of deaths from infectious diseases in a most extraordinar' manner; and there will be no more fear of accidents in the Mitherdrum Road, for we are going to have a conteenuous line of lamps that'll go right in to the Glesca lamps. I do not call these small matters. As for the asphalting of the pavement in front of John Anderson's line of houses," continued the Laird, as he consulted the memorandum in his hand, "that is a small matter, if ye like. I am not disposed to pronounce an opinion on that matter: they can settle it without my voice. But it will make a great difference to John Anderson; and I would like to see him come forward with a bigger subscription for the new Park. Well, well; we must fight through as best we can."

It was here suggested to the Laird that he should not let these weighty matters trouble him while he is away on a holiday.

"Trouble me?" said he, lightly. "Not a bit, man! People who have to meddle in public affairs must learn how to throw off their cares. I am not troubled. I am going to give the men a dram; for better pulling I never saw in a boat!"

He was as good as his word, too. He had the luncheon-basket handed down from the bow; he got out the whiskey bottle; there was a glass filled out for each of the men, which was drunk in solemn silence.

"Now, boys," said he, as they took to their oars again, "haven't ye got a song or a chorus to make the rowing easy?"

But they were too shy for a bit. Presently, however, we heard at the bow a low, plaintive, querulous voice; and the very oars seemed to recognise the air as they gripped the water. Then there was a hum of a chorus—not very musical—and it was in the Gaelic—but we knew what the refrain meant.

Ō bōatmān, ă fārewĕll tō yŏu,
Ō bōatmān, ă fārewĕll tō yŏu,
Whĕrĕvĕr yŏu māy bĕ gōĭng.

Digitized by Google

That is something like the English of it: we had heard the *Fhir a Bhata* in other days.

The long, heavy pull is nearly over. Here are the low-lying reefs of rock outside Inch Kenneth; not a whisper is permissible as we creep into the nearest bay. And then the men and the boat are left there; and the Youth—perhaps dimly conscious that his uncle means the seal-skin for Mary Avon—grasps his rifle and steals away over the undulating shelves of rock; while his two companions, with more leisure but with not less circumspection, follow to observe his operations. Fortunately there is no screaming sea-pyot or whistling curlew to give warning; stealthily, almost bent in two, occasionally crawling on all fours, he makes his way along the crannies in the reef, until, as we see, he must be nearly approaching the channel on his left. There he pauses to take breath. He creeps behind a rock; and cautiously looks over. He continues his progress.

"This is terrible woark," says the Laird, in a stage-whisper, as he, too —with a much heavier bulk to carry—worms along. From time to time he has to stay to apply his handkerchief to his forehead; it is hot work on this still, breathless day.

And at last we, too, get down to the edge of a channel—some hundred yards lower than Howard Smith's post—and from behind a rock we have a pretty clear view of the scene of operations. Apparently there is no sign of any living thing—except that a big fish leapt into the air, some dozen yards off. Thereafter a dead silence.

After waiting about a quarter of an hour or so, the Laird seemed to become violently excited, though he would neither budge nor speak. And there, between two islands right opposite young Smith, appeared two shining black heads on the still water; and they were evidently coming down this very channel. On they came—turning about one way and another, as if to look that the coast was clear. Every moment we expected to hear the crack of the rifle. Then the heads silently disappeared.

The Laird was beside himself with disappointment.

"Why did he no shoot? Why did he no shoot?" he said, in an excited whisper.

He had scarcely spoken when he was startled by an apparition. Right opposite to him—not more than twenty yards off—a black thing appeared on the water—with a glistening smooth head, and large, soft eyes. Then another. We dared not move. We waited for the whistle of the rifle-bullet. The next instant the first seal caught sight of the Laird; raised its head for an instant at least six inches higher; then silently plunged along with its companion. They were gone, at all events.

The Youth came marching along the rocks, his rifle over his shoulder.

"Why didn't you fire?" his uncle said, almost angrily.

"I thought they were coming nearer," said he. "I was just about

Digitized by Google

to fire when they dived. Mind, it isn't very easy to get on to a thing that is bobbing about like that, with a rifle. I propose we have luncheon, now, until the tide ebbs a bit; then there may be a chance of catching one lying on the rocks. That is the proper time for getting a shot at a seal."

We had luncheon: there was no difficulty about securing that. But as for getting at the seals—whether we crawled over the rocks, or lay in hiding, or allowed the boat to drift towards some island, on the chance of one of them rising in our neighbourhood—it was no use at all. There were plenty of seals about: a snap shot now and again served to break the monotony of the day; but that present for Mary Avon seemed as remote as ever. And when one is determined on shooting a seal, one is not likely to waste one's attention, and cartridges, on such inferior animals as skarts.

The silver-grey day became more golden; there was a touch of warm purple about the shadows of Staffa.

"Come," said the Laird at last. "We must go back. It is no use. I have often heard people say that if you miss the first chance at a seal it never gives ye another."

"Better luck next time, uncle," said the Youth; but his uncle refused to be comforted.

And the first thing he said to Mary Avon when he got back to the yacht was—

"We have not got it."

"Got what?" said she.

"The seal-skin I wanted to have dressed for ye. No, nor the skarts I wanted to have made into a muff or a bag for ye."

"Oh," said she, promptly, "I am very glad. I hope you won't shoot any of those poor things on my account; I should be very sorry indeed."

The Laird took this as one of the familiar protestations on the part of women, who wouldn't for the world have poor things shot, but who don't object to wearing any amount of furs and feathers, to say nothing of having innocent sheep sheared and harmless silk-worms robbed in order to deck themselves out. She should have that dressed seal-skin, and that muff of skarts' breasts, all the same.

Nothing of stupendous importance happened that evening except that —after we had caught three dozen of good-sized lithe and returned to the yacht with this welcome addition to our stores—there was a general discussion of our plans for the next few days. And our gentle hostess was obviously looking forward to Angus Sutherland's coming back to us with great pleasure; and we were to make our return to suit his convenience; and she would write to him whenever we got near a post-office again.

Mary Avon had sate silent during all this. At last, she said—apparently with some effort and yet very deliberately—

"I—I think you are a little cruel to Dr. Sutherland. You are

Digitized by Google

forcing him to come with you against his better judgment—for you know, with his prospects, and the calls on his time, he cannot afford such long idleness. Do you think it is quite fair?"

The woman stared at this girl, who spoke with some earnestness, though her eyes were downcast.

"He would do anything to please you," Mary Avon continued, as if she were determined to get through with some speech that she had prepared, "and he is very fond of sailing: but do you think you should allow him to injure his prospects in this way? Wouldn't it be a greater kindness to write and say that, if he really feels he ought to return to London, you would not hold him to his promise? I am sure he would not be offended: he would understand you at once. And I am sure he would do what is clearly right: he would go straight back to London, and resume his work—for his own sake and for the sake of those who count on a great future for him. I, for one, should be very sorry to see him come back to idle away his time in sailing."

And still Queen Tita stared at the girl, though their eyes did not meet. And she could scarcely believe that it was Mary Avon who had counselled this cold dismissal.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Uncertain, Coy, and Hard to Please."

There are two people walking up and down the deck this beautiful morning: the lazy ones are still below, dawdling over breakfast. And now young Smith, though he is not much more than an acquaintance, talks quite confidentially to his hostess. She has his secret; he looks to her for aid. And when they do have a quiet moment like this together there is usually but one person of whom they speak.

"I must say she has an extraordinary spirit," he observes, with some decision. "Why, I believe she is rather pleased than otherwise to have lost that money. She is not a bit afraid of going up to London to support herself by her work. It seems to amuse her on the whole!"

"Mary has plenty of courage," says the other quietly.

"I don't wonder at my uncle being so fond of her: he likes her independent ways and her good humour. I shouldn't be surprised if he were to adopt her as his daughter, and cut me out. There would be some sense in that."

"I am glad you take it so coolly," says our governor-general, in a matter-of-fact way that rather startles him. "More unlikely things have happened."

But he recovers himself directly.

"No, no," says he, laughing. "There is one objection. She could not sit on any of the parochial Boards of Strathgovan. Now I know my uncle looks forward to putting me on the Police Committee and the

Digitized by Google

Lighting Committee and no end of other Committees. By the way, she might go on the School Board. Do they have women on the School Boards in Scotland?"

On this point his hostess was no better informed than himself.

"Well," said he, after a bit, "I wouldn't call her pretty, you know; but she has a singularly interesting face."

"Oh, do you think so?" says the other, quite innocently.

"I do, indeed," answers the ingenuous youth. "And the more you see of her the more interesting it becomes. You seem to get so well acquainted with her somehow; and—and you have a sort of feeling that her presence is sort of necessary."

This was somewhat vague; but he made another wild effort to express himself.

"What I mean is—that—that suppose she were to leave the yacht, wouldn't the saloon look quite different? And wouldn't the sailing be quite different? You would know there was something wanting."

"I should, indeed," is the emphatic reply.

"I never knew anyone," says the Youth, warming to his work of thorough explanation, "about whose presence you seem so conscious—even when she isn't here—I don't mean that exactly—I mean that at this moment now, you know she is on board the yacht—and it would be quite different if she were not. I suppose most people wouldn't call her pretty. There is nothing of the Book of Beauty about her. But I call it a most interesting face. And she has fine eyes. Anybody must admit that. They have a beautiful, soft expression; and they can laugh even when she is quite silent——"

"My dear Mr. Smith," says his hostess, suddenly stopping short, and with a kind of serious smile on her face, "let me talk frankly to you. You acted very sensibly, I think, in coming with us to humour your uncle. He will come to see that this scheme of his is impracticable; and in the meantime, if you don't mind the discomfort of it, you have a holiday. That is all quite well. But pray don't think it necessary that you should argue yourself into falling in love with Mary. I am not in her confidence on such a delicate matter; but one has eyes; and I think I might almost safely say to you that, even if you persuaded yourself that Mary would make an excellent wife—and be presentable to your friends—I say even if you succeeded in persuading yourself I am afraid you would only have thrown that labour away. Please don't try to convince yourself that you ought to fall in love with her."

This was plain speaking. But then our admiral-in-chief was very quickly sensitive where Mary Avon was concerned; and perhaps she did not quite like her friend being spoken of as though she were a pill that had to be swallowed. Of course the Youth instantly disclaimed any intention of that kind. He had a very sincere regard for the girl, so far as he had seen her; he was not persuading himself; he was only saying how much she improved when you got better acquainted with her.

Digitized by Google

"And if," said he, with just a touch of dignity, "if Miss Avon is—is—engaged——"

"Oh, I did not say that," his hostess quickly interposed. "Oh, certainly not. It was only a guess on my part——"

"—— or likely to be engaged," he continued, with something of the same reserve, "I am sure I am very glad for her sake; and whoever marries her ought to have a cheerful home and a pleasant companion."

This was a generous sentiment; but there was not much of a "wish-you-may-be-happy" air about the young man. Moreover, where was the relief he ought to have experienced on hearing that there was an obstacle—or likelihood of an obstacle—to the execution of his uncle's scheme which would absolve him from responsibility altogether?

However, the subject could not be continued just then; for at this moment a tightly-brushed small head, and a narrow-brimmed felt hat, and a shapely neck surrounded by an upstanding collar and bit of ribbon of navy-blue, appeared at the top of the companion, and Mary Avon, looking up with her black eyes full of a cheerful friendliness, said—

"Well, John, are you ready to start yet?"

And the great, brown-bearded John of Skye, looking down at this small Jack-in-the-box with a smile of welcome on his face, said—

"Oh, yes, mem, when the breakfast is over."

"Do you think it is blowing outside, then?"

"Oh, no, mem, but there is a good breeze; and maybe there will be a bit of a rowl from the Atlantic. Will Mr. —— himself be for going now?"

"Oh, yes, certainly," she says, with a fine assumption of authority. "We are quite ready when you are ready, John; Fred will have the things off the table in a couple of minutes."

"Very well, mem," says the obedient John of Skye, going forward to get the men up to the windlass.

Our young Doctor should have been there to see us getting under way. The Sound of Ulva is an excellent harbour and anchorage when you are once in it; but getting out of it, unless with both wind and tide in your favour, is very like trying to manœuvre a man-of-war in a tea-cup. But we had long ago come to the conclusion that John of Skye could sail the *White Dove* through a gas-pipe, with half a gale dead in his teeth; and the manner in which he got us out of this narrow and tortuous channel fully justified our confidence.

"Very prettily done, Captain John!" said the Laird—who was beginning to give himself airs on nautical matters—when we had got out into the open.

And here, as we soon discovered, was the brisk fresh breeze that John of Skye had predicted; and the running swell, too, that came sweeping in to the mouth of Loch-na-Keal. Black indeed looked that far-reaching loch on this breezy, changeful morning—as dark as it was when the chief of Ulva's Isle came down to the shore with his runaway bride; and all

Digitized by Google

along Ben-More and over the Gribun cliffs hung heavy masses of cloud, dark and threatening as if with thunder. But far away in the south there was a more cheerful outlook; the windy sea shimmering in light; some gleams of blue in the sky: we knew that the sunshine must be shining on the green clover and beautiful sands of Iona. The *White Dove* seemed to understand what was required of her. Her head was set for the gleaming south; her white wings outspread; as she sprang to meet those rushing seas we knew we were escaping from the thunder-darkness that lay over Loch-na-Keal.

And Ulva: had we known that we were now leaving Ulva behind us for the last time, should we not have taken another look back, even though it now lay under a strange and mysterious gloom? Perhaps not. We had grown to love the island in other days. And when one shuts one's eyes in winter, it is not to see an Ulva of desolate rocks and leaden waves; it is a fair and shining Ulva, with blue seas breaking whitely along its shores; and magical still channels, with mermaid's halls of sea-weed; and an abundant, interesting life—all manner of sea-birds, black rabbits running among the rocks, seals swimming in the silent bays. Then the patch of civilisation under shelter of the hills; the yellow corn-fields; the dots of human creatures and the red and tawny-grey cattle visible afar in the meadow; the solitary house; the soft foliage of trees and bushes; the wild flowers along the cliffs. That is the green-shored island: that is the *Ool-a-va* of the sailors; we know it only in sunlight and among blue summer seas: it shines for us for ever!

The people who go yachting are a fickle folk. The scene changes—and their interests change—every few minutes. Now it is the swooping down of a solan; again it is the appearance of another island far away; presently it is a shout of laughter forward, as some unlucky wight gets drowned in a shower of sea-spray: anything catches their attention for the moment. And so the *White Dove* swings along; and the sea gets heavier and heavier; and we watch the breakers springing high over the black rocks of Colonsay. It is the Laird who is now instructing our new guest; pointing out to him, as they come in view, Staffa, the Dutchman, Fladda, and Lunga, and Cairnaburg. Tiree is invisible at the horizon: there is too wild a whirl of wind and water.

The gloom behind us increases; we know not what is about to happen to our beloved but now distant Ulva—what sudden rumble of thunder is about to startle the silence of the dark Loch-na-Keal. But ahead of us the south is still shining clear: blow, winds, that we may gain the quiet shelter of Polterriv before the evening falls! And is it not full moon to-night?—to-night our new guest may see the yellow moon shining on the still waters of Iona Sound.

But the humiliating truth must be told. The heavy sea has been trying to one unaccustomed to life on board. Howard Smith, though answering questions well enough, and even joining voluntarily in conversation occasionally, wears a preoccupied air. He does not take

Digitized by Google

much interest in the caves of Bourg. The bright look has gone from his face.

His gentle hostess—who has herself had moments of gloom on the bosom of the deep—recognises these signs instantly; and insists on immediate luncheon. There is a double reason for this haste. We can now run under the lee of the Erisgeir rocks, where there will be less danger to Master Fred's plates and tumblers. So we are all bundled down into the saloon; the swell sensibly subsides as we get to leeward of Erisgeir; there is a scramble of helping and handing; and another explosion in the galley tells us that Master Fred has not yet mastered the art of releasing effervescing fluids. Half a tumblerful of that liquid puts new life into our solemn friend. The colour returns to his face, and brightness to his eyes. He admits that he was beginning to long for a few minutes on firm land—but now—but now—he is even willing to join us in an excursion that has been talked of to the far Dubhartach lighthouse.

"But we must really wait for Angus," our hostess says, "before going out there. He was always so anxious to go to Dubhartach."

"But surely you won't ask him to come away from his duties again?" Mary Avon puts in hastily. "You know he ought to go back to London at once."

"I know I have written him a letter," says the other demurely. "You can read it if you like, Mary. It is in pencil, for I was afraid of the ink-bottle going waltzing over the table."

Miss Avon would not read the letter. She said we must be past Erisgeir by this time; and proposed we should go on deck. This we did; and the Youth was now so comfortable and assured in his mind that, by lying full length on the deck, close to the weather bulwarks, he managed to light a cigar. He smoked there in much content, almost safe from the spray.

Mary Avon was seated at the top of the companion, reading. Her hostess came and squeezed herself in beside her, and put her arm round her.

"Mary," said she, "why don't you want Angus Sutherland to come back to the yacht?"

"I!" said she, in great surprise—though she did not meet the look of the elder woman—"I—I—don't you see yourself that he ought to go back to London? How can he look after that magazine while he is away in the Highlands? And—and—he has so much to look forward to—so much to do—that you should not encourage him in making light of his work——"

"Making light of his work!" said the other. "I am almost sure that you yourself told him that he deserved and required a long—a very long—holiday."

"You did, certainly."

"And didn't you?"

The young lady looked rather embarrassed.

Digitized by Google

"When you saw him," said she, with flushed cheeks, "so greatly enjoying the sailing—absorbed in it—and—and gaining health and strength, too—well, of course you naturally wished that he should come back and go away with you again. But it is different on reflection. You should not ask him."

"Why, what evil is likely to happen to him through taking another six weeks' holiday? Is he likely to fall out of the race of life because of a sail in the *White Dove?* And doesn't he know his own business? He is not a child."

"He would do a great deal to please you."

"I want him to please himself," said the other; and she added, with a deadly frown gathering on her forehead, "and I won't have you, Miss Dignity, interfering with the pleasures of my guests. And there is to be no snubbing, and no grim looks, and no hints about work, and London, and other nonsense, when Angus Sutherland comes back to us. You shall stand by the gangway—do you hear?—and receive him with a smiling face; and if you are not particularly kind, and civil, and attentive to him, I'll have you lashed to the yard-arm and painted blue—keel-haul me if I don't."

Fairer and fairer grew the scene around us as the brave *White Dove* went breasting the heavy Atlantic rollers. Blue and white overhead; the hot sunlight doing its best to dry the dripping rocks; Iona shining there over the smoother waters of the Sound; the sea breaking white, and spouting up in columns, as it dashed against the pale red promontories of the Ross of Mull. But then this stiff breeze had backed to the west; and there was many a long tack to be got over before we got quit of the Atlantic swell and ran clear into the Sound. The evening was drawing on apace as we slowly and cautiously steered into the little creek of Polterriv. No sooner had the anchor rattled out than we heard the clear tinkling of Master Fred's bell; how on earth had he managed to cook dinner amid all that diving and rolling and pitching?

And then, as we had hoped, it was a beautiful evening; and the long gig was got out, and shawls for the women-folk flung into the stern. The fishing did not claim our attention. Familiar as some of us were with the wonderful twilights of the north, which of us had ever seen anything more solemn, and still, and lovely than these colours of sea and shore? Half-past nine at night on the 8th of August; and still the west and north were flushed with a pale rose-red, behind the dark, rich, olive-green of the shadowed Iona. But what was that to the magic world that lay before us as we returned to the yacht? Now the moon had arisen, and it seemed to be of a clear, lambent gold; and the cloudless heavens and the still sea were of a violet hue—not imaginatively, or relatively, but positively and literally violet. Then between the violet-coloured sky and the violet-coloured sea, a long line of rock, jet black as it appeared to us. That was all the picture: the yellow moon, the violet sky, the violet sea, the line of black rock. No doubt it was the intensity of the shadows

Digitized by Google

along this line of rock that gave that extraordinary luminousness to the still heavens and the still sea.

When we got back to the yacht a telegram awaited us. It had been sent to Bunessan, the nearest telegraph-station; but some kind friends there, recognising the *White Dove* as she came along by Erisgeir, and shrewdly concluding that we must pass the night at Polterriv, had been so kind as to forward it on to Fion-phort by a messenger.

"I thought so!" says Queen T. with a fine delight in her face as she reads the telegram. "It is from Angus. He is coming on Thursday. We must go back to meet him at Ballahulish or Corpach."

Then the discourtesy of this remark struck her.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Smith," said she, instantly. "Of course, I mean if it is quite agreeable to you. He does not expect us, you see; he would come on here——"

"I assure you I would as soon go to Ballahulish as anywhere else," says the Youth promptly. "It is quite the same to me—it is all new, you see, and all equally charming."

Mary Avon alone expressed no delight at this prospect of our going to Ballahulish to meet Angus Sutherland; she sate silent; her eyes were thoughtful and distant; it was not of anything around her that she was thinking.

The moon had got whiter now; the sea and the sky blue-black in place of that soft warm violet colour. We sate on deck till a late hour; the world was asleep around us; not a sound disturbed the absolute stillness of land and sea.

And where was the voice of our singing bird? Had the loss of a mere sum of money made her forget all about Mary Beaton, and Mary Seaton, "and Mary Carmichael and me"? Or was the midnight silence too much for her; and the thought of the dusky cathedral over there; with the grave-stones pale in the moonlight; and all around a whispering of the lonely sea? She had nothing to fear. She might have crossed over to Iona and might have walked all by herself through the ruins, and in calmness regarded the sculptured stones. The dead sleep sound.

Digitized by Google

What the English have done for the Indian People.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

I.

BRITISH rule in India is again upon its trial. On the one hand, the English nation finds itself called to enter on new responsibilities, and to embark on unknown dangers. On the other hand, doubters have arisen who dispute whether our supremacy in the East is a gain either to ourselves or to the people over whom we rule. The question as to the benefit of our Indian connection to ourselves is a rhetorical rather than a serious one. For with the downfall of British rule in India would disappear that security of person and property which forms the first essential for our vast commerce with the East. I, for one, am not afraid of the cry of "Perish India," when I remember that that cry means "Perish our greatest customer among all the British possessions; perish the chief consumer of Manchester goods; perish 55 millions sterling of British trade per annum." What we have reason to fear is not the cry of "Perish India," but the cry of "Perish the responsibilities entailed upon us by our rule in India."

If, however, as some have recently alleged, that rule has failed to benefit the Indian races, then I can sympathise with those who question whether we should continue to accept or to extend the responsibilities which Indian rule involves. For no government has a right to exist which does not exist in the interests of the governed. The test of British rule in India is, not what it has done for ourselves, but what it has done for the Indian people. By this test our work in the East must stand or fall. If our attempt to administer that vast and distant empire has turned out a failure, if its people are not more free, more secure, and more prosperous under British rule than they were under their native dynasties, then the wise course for Great Britain would seem to be to curtail her former responsibilities, to accept no new ones, and to withdraw as far as may be from an undertaking to which she had proved unequal.

If, on the other hand, we find that our countrymen have not failed in their splendid and difficult task; if we find that British rule in India means order in place of anarchy, protection in place of oppression, government by the law in place of misgovernment by the sword, and a vast free people dwelling in safety where of old each man was beaten down beneath whosoever was stronger than himself; then I think that Great Britain may with a firm heart continue to accept the great responsibility which has fallen to it, and that it may calmly face the duties which that responsibility involves.

Digitized by Google

During the last ten years it has been my business to visit, almost every winter, the twelve provinces of India, and to superintend a survey of their population and resources. The Indian Government has, so to speak, ordered me to conduct for it a great stock-taking after a century of British rule. I have often amused myself, during my solitary peregrinations, by imagining what a Hindu of the last century would think of the present state of his country, if he could revisit the earth. I have supposed that his first surprise at the outward physical changes had subsided; that he had got accustomed to the fact that thousands of square miles of jungle, which in his time were inhabited only by wild beasts, have been turned into fertile crop-lands; that fever-smitten swamps have been covered with healthy well-drained cities; that the mountain walls which shut off the interior of India from the seaports have been pierced by roads and scaled by railways; that the great rivers which formed the barriers between provinces, and desolated the country with their floods, have now been controlled to the uses of man, spanned by bridges, and tapped by canals. But what would strike him as more surprising than these outward changes is the security of the people. In provinces where every man, from the prince to the peasant, a hundred years ago, went armed, he would look round in vain for a matchlock or a sword. He would find the multitudinous native states of India, which he remembered in jealous isolation, broken only by merciless wars, now trading quietly with each other, bound together by railways and roads, by the post and the telegraph. He would find, moreover, much that was new as well as much that was changed. He would see the country dotted with imposing edifices in a strange foreign architecture, of which he could not guess the uses. He would ask what wealthy prince had reared for himself that spacious palace? He would be answered that the building was no pleasure-house for the rich, but a hospital for the poor. He would enquire, in honour of what new deity is this splendid shrine? He would be told that it was no new temple to the gods, but a school for the people. Instead of bristling fortresses he would see courts of justice; in place of a Muhammadan general in charge of each district, he would find an English magistrate; instead of a swarming soldiery, he would discover a police.

I shall endeavour to present a few scenes of the panorama which would thus pass before his eyes. I shall not venture to trouble the reader with statistics of any complicated sort. The statistics of British India form indeed a record of progress of which every Englishman may well feel proud. They read like the day-dream of a philanthropist rather than like a sober narrative of administration. They show what can be accomplished by good government among long-depressed Asiatic races—by a government not always well instructed, and sometimes very fallible, but by a government honest in its aims, and penetrated by a great desire to do its duty by the people. But while the contrast between the past and the present is full of encouragement, it is also full of warning. The old difficulties arise afresh; the old problems

Digitized by Google

have to be solved in new forms. Internal disturbances, which a hundred years ago were chronic in every part of India, still occur at rarer intervals. At this moment Great Britain is called upon to deal with a difficult frontier question; in the last century every frontier of India was in desolation or in flames. Twice during the past ten years has British charity flowed forth on a magnificent scale to relieve Indian distress. But the word famine, though still heard, has lost its old significance. It has ceased to mean ten millions of human beings swept away by starvation in a single summer; it no longer leaves a third of the country empty of cultivators, to relapse into jungle, and to be tenanted for the next twenty years only by wild beasts. Much has been accomplished, but much remains to be done; and it is in no vainglorious spirit that we contrast what has been with what is. In thinking of her work in India, Great Britain may proudly look back, but she must also look anxiously forward. If I now dwell exclusively on what England has accomplished in India, it is only that I may clear the way for stating with the greater emphasis, and at no distant date, "What England has yet to do for the Indian People."

Indian frontier affairs have lately occupied much attention, and we shall commence our sketch by a glance at the frontiers of India in the last century. India is a great three-cornered country, stretching southward from Asia into the sea. Its northern base rests upon the Himalayan ranges; the chief part of its western side is washed by the Indian Ocean, and of its eastern by the Bay of Bengal. But while thus guarded along the whole length of its boundaries by nature's defences, the mountains and the sea, it has, at its north-eastern and north-western corners, two opposite sets of gateways which connect it with the rest of Asia. Through these gateways successive hordes of invaders have poured into India, and in the last century the process was still going on. Each set of new comers plundered and massacred without mercy and without restraint. During 700 years, the warring races of Central Asia and Afghanistan filled up their measure of bloodshed and pillage to the full. Sometimes they returned with their spoil to their mountains, leaving desolation behind; sometimes they killed off or drove out the former inhabitants, and settled down in India as lords of the soil; sometimes they founded imperial dynasties, destined to be crushed, each in its turn, by a new host swarming into India through the Afghan passes. In the middle of the last century six such invasions on a great scale took place in twenty-three years. The first was led by a soldier of fortune from Persia who slaughtered Afghan and Indian alike; the last five were regular Afghan invasions.

The precise meaning of the word "invasion" in India during the last century may be gathered from the following facts. It signified not merely a host of twenty to a hundred thousand barbarians on the march, paying for nothing, and eating up every hamlet, and cottage, and farmyard; burning and slaughtering on the slightest provocation, and often

Digitized by Google

in mere sport. It usually also meant a grand final sack and massacre at the capital of the invaded country. Here is the account of the fate of Delhi in the first of the six invasions in the middle of the last century—an account drawn up by the least rhetorical and most philosophical of Indian historians, the father of John Stuart Mill. Delhi had peacefully opened its gates to the strangers, but a brawl had afterwards arisen between the troops and the citizens. "With the first light of the morning," says Mill, "the invading leader, Nadir, issued forth, and, dispersing bands of soldiers in every direction, ordered them to slaughter the inhabitants, without regard to age or sex, in every street or avenue in which the body of a murdered Persian should be found. From sunrise to midday the sabre raged; and by that time not less than 8,000 were numbered with the dead. During the massacre and pillage the city was set on fire in several places." At the end of a fifty-eight days' sack, the plunderers went off with a booty valued at nine millions sterling.

On this first of the six invasions, then, 8,000 men, women, and children were hacked to pieces in one forenoon in the streets of the capital. But the Persian general knew how to stop the massacre at his pleasure. The Afghan leaders had less authority, and their five great invasions during the thirteen middle years of the last century form one of the most appalling tales of bloodshed and wanton cruelty ever inflicted on the human race. In one of these invasions, the miserable capital, Delhi, had opened her gates and received the Afghans as guests. Yet for several weeks, not merely for six hours on this occasion, the citizens were exposed to every foul enormity which a barbarian army could practise on a prostrate foe. Meanwhile the Afghan cavalry were scouring the country, slaying, burning, and mutilating in the meanest hamlet as in the greatest town. They took especial delight in sacking the holy places of the Hindus, and murdering the defenceless votaries at the shrines. For example, one gang of 25,000 Afghan horsemen swooped down upon the sacred city of Muttra during a festival, while it was thronged with peaceful Hindu pilgrims engaged in their devotions. "They burned the houses," says the Tyrolese Jesuit Tieffenthaler, who was in India at that time, "together with their inmates, massacring others with the sword and the lance; hauling off into captivity maidens and youths, men and women. In the temples they slaughtered cows," the sacred animal of the Hindus, "and smeared the images and pavement with the blood."

It is needless to quote further from the tale of Afghan atrocities in the last century. They went on year after year, the Afghans being too loosely organised to serve as a barrier against the hosts from Central Asia, and always ready for an Indian invasion on their own account. The borderland between Afghanistan and India lay silent and waste; indeed districts far within the frontier, which had once been thickly peopled and are now again thickly peopled, were swept bare of inhabitants. Thus Gujranwala District, which contained the ancient capital of the Panjáb in Buddhist times, was utterly depopulated. Its present

Digitized by Google

inhabitants are all immigrants of comparatively recent date, and before their advent the whole region seems to have been abandoned. The district, which was thus stripped of its inhabitants in the last century, has now a new population of over half a million souls.

The Afghan question survives to this day, but I think you will agree with me that its present form, although by no means easy of solution, is preferable to the shape in which it presented itself in the last century. That question has now passed beyond the range of purely Indian politics, and must be decided by the deliberate voice of the British Parliament. In India we are neither Whigs nor Tories. We are simply a body of administrators doing our best to govern an Asiatic country without reference to European politics, and in the interests of the people themselves. The task in its present dimensions is a sufficiently vast one. So far as I may speak for Indian officials, and I have spent the last eighteen years of my life among them, I should say that Indian administrators neither desire annexation, nor do they shrink from the responsibilities which annexation, when necessary, involves. It is for the British nation, not for their Indian servants, to settle the future of Afghanistan. But if England resolve that Afghanistan is to cease to be a turbulent neighbour, and that she is to become henceforth a well-ordered part of the Indian Empire, then the past history of that Empire shows that there will be no permanent difficulty in giving effect to your decision. We have taught more unruly, more numerous, and far better organised races than the Afghans the lesson of settling down into peaceful industry. I do not underrate the difficulties. The lesson is not to be taught in a single year, and both the teachers and the learners may make some very serious mistakes at first. But the task of dealing with Afghanistan is one of less magnitude than the task of dealing with the Panjáb was thirty years ago. Kabul formed at one time as integral a part of the Delhi Empire as the Panjáb now forms a part of British India; and the mountain passes are a much more simple problem for the military engineers of 1879 than the Panjáb rivers were for their predecessors in 1848. At this moment it would be an easier task to form a railway route into Afghanistan than to complete the section of the Panjáb Railway across the Indus from Lahore to Peshawur. As a matter of fact, I believe that trains will be running into Afghanistan before through communication is established from Peshawur to Calcutta. If Great Britain decides that a similar course is to be adopted in Afghanistan as was adopted in the Panjáb, the same results will follow. Indian soldiers have again proved that they know how to conquer, and Indian administrators will again show that they know how to govern. The mass of the Afghan people, no longer ground down by the military clans, will find that a new era of prosperity and security has begun; while, before ten years are over, the military clans of Afghanistan will pride themselves, as our late enemies the Gurkhas and the Sikhs now pride themselves, on supplying the best disciplined and most loyal regiments to our Indian army. British babies will be

Digitized by Google

wheeled about in perambulators in cities in which no European has hitherto dared to show his face; and another frontier people will have been added to the list of wild races who have turned their spears into pruning hooks under English rule.

So much for the north-western border, which is still a source of discomfort to us; but in the last century invasions and inroads were yearly events along the whole frontier of India. The Himalayan mountains, instead of serving as a northern wall to shut out aggressors, formed a line of fastnesses from which the hill races poured down upon the plains. For fifteen hundred miles along their foot stretched a thick belt of territory which no one dared to cultivate. This silent border-land varied from twenty to fifty miles in breadth, and embraced a total area of 30,000 square miles, which yielded no food for man, but teemed with wild beasts who nightly sallied forth to ravage the herds and hamlets in the open country beyond. Such a border-land seemed to the miserable villagers on the plains to be the best possible frontier; for its dense jungles served as some sort of barrier against the invasions of the wild Himalayan races, and it bred deadly fevers which made havoc of armies that attempted a passage through it. Indeed, the ancient Hindu laws of Manu, written more than 2,000 years ago, ordained, as a protection to a royal city or kingdom, a belt of wilderness twenty miles around it in place of fortifications; and the peasantry of Northern India were thankful in the last century for the tract of disease-laden jungle which, to a certain extent, defended them from the savage hillmen beyond.

Such was the state of the north-western and the long northern boundary of India before the establishment of British rule. A glance at the north-eastern border discloses a still more painful picture. The history of the fertile valley of Assam, in the north-eastern corner of India, is one long narrative of invasion and extermination. Anciently the seat of a powerful Hindu kingdom, whose ruined forts of massive hewn stone we find buried in the jungle, Assam was devastated, like the rest of Bengal, by fanatical Muhammadan invaders in the fifteenth century from the west. A fierce aboriginal race (the Koch) next swooped down on it from the north. They in turn were crushed by another aboriginal race (the Ahams) from the east; and these again were being exterminated by the Burmese from the south, when they implored the English to interfere. During the last century large tracts of Assam were depopulated, and throughout that province and Eastern Bengal more than 30,000 square miles of fertile frontier districts lay waste. In addition to these systematic invasions the smaller hill tribes every autumn rushed down upon the miserable hamlets which were left, and drove away the women and the cattle.

The great mountain wall round Northern India failed therefore, till the British came upon the scene, to afford any security to the Indian races. The sea, which forms the natural defence of the rest of the country, was in like manner only a source of new dangers. On the Bay of

Digitized by Google

Bengal, the pirates from the Burmese coast sailed up the great rivers, burning the villages, massacring or carrying off into slavery the inhabitants. The first English surveyor, in the second half of the last century, entered on his maps a fertile and now populous tract on the seaboard, as bare of villages, with the significant words written across it, "depopulated by the Mughs," or sea-robbers. A fleet was ineffectually maintained by the Muhammadan Government to keep open the river-channels, and a heavy impost, whose name survives to the present day, although the tax itself has long been abolished, was in vain levied for this service. On the other side of the peninsula, in the Indian Ocean, piracy was conducted on a grander scale. Wealthy rájás kept up luxurious courts upon the extortions which their pirate fleets levied from trading vessels, and from the villages along the coast. The truth is, that the natural defences of India, the mountains and the sea, were in the last century equally powerless to protect the Indian races.

This state of things could not be permitted under British rule, and the first business of the English was to secure India from foreign invasions. The sea-robbers were effectively dealt with. One of Clive's achievements was rooting out the pirate nests of the south-western coast; and the Indian navy, after sweeping the robber hordes from the sea, and rendering Indian waters as safe as the English Channel, finished its work nineteen years ago, and was abolished in 1861.

The unruly tribes of the Himalayan frontiers had always their hill fastnesses to retreat to. Their subjugation took a longer time, and is less complete, as our troubles with Afghanistan attest. But by persuasion, and, when necessary, by chastisement, we have taught the wild races along the whole northern and north-eastern frontier, for a distance of 1,500 miles, the lesson that they must please keep quiet, and betake themselves to some other livelihood than the pillage of the husbandmen on the plains. Most of them have been apt scholars. The great kingdom of Nepal on the north, which forced us to correct its inveterate practice of raiding by two campaigns, followed by partial annexation, has, for the last sixty years, been our firm ally, and hurried out its armies to our help in the Mutiny of 1857. At one time during this long interval, the dynastic intrigues, always fermenting in a native court, threatened to bring the Nepalese into conflict with the British; and on that occasion the whole kingdom of Nepal was kept loyal to its treaties, through a prolonged crisis, by the firmness and skill of a single Englishman, Brian Hodgson. Other native states, like the principality of Kuch Behar, at once settled down into peaceful industry. Its first and only treaty with us, dated 1773, remains unbroken by either party to this day, a monument of mutual good faith.

A firm frontier being established, the peasantry spread themselves out upon the fertile depopulated lands. The task of reclaiming these tracts has been a heavy one. In some parts, as in the now populous district of Goalpara with its half-million of inhabitants, more money was

Digitized by Google

spent, until twenty-five years ago, by Government in rewards for killing the wild beasts than the whole sum realised from the land-revenue. The broad belt of waste land along the frontier was almost the only unoccupied territory which the British Government could grant to European settlers. The first British capitalists had to do battle alike with the banditti and the wild beasts. We read in the manuscript records of 1788 of a Mr. Raush, one of the earliest English merchants in Assam, who made an alliance on his own account with the local Rájá, and sent a private regiment of 700 men to the aid of that prince. While the natives of India have pushed their rice cultivation towards the foot of the mountains, English capitalists have dotted their slopes with tea-plantations. Not less than 13,000 square miles of border-districts have been reclaimed, and yield each year sixteen millions sterling worth of produce. The tea-gardens alone exported last year three millions sterling worth of tea, chiefly to England.

We have heard a good deal of late about a scientific frontier for India, and I am not going to say one word here on that vexed subject. But it may be well for us to realise the meaning of an *unscientific* frontier in India. The unscientific frontier of the last century signified that sixty thousand square miles of border-land (double the whole area of Scotland) were abandoned to jungle and the wild beasts, not because there were no people to cultivate the soil, but because they did not dare to do so. An unscientific frontier signified that a tract which might have yielded, and which will yet yield, thirty millions sterling worth of food each year, lay untilled through terror of the turbulent hill races. The improvements effected by a century of British rule in this old unscientific frontier mean that 13,000 square miles have already been brought under the plough, growing each year sixteen millions sterling worth of produce, or more than the whole cost of the Indian army and of the defence of the Indian Empire.

The task of freeing India from foreign invasion was, however, only the first of many heavy responsibilities which our acquisition of the country entailed. The dying throes of the Mughal Empire had let loose its disbanded or revolted armies upon the people. The troops, finding that their pay was no longer forthcoming from the Muhammadan treasury, lived by open pillage. In what are now the most peaceful and most populous districts of Bengal, there were, in the last century, standing camps of banditti numbering 40,000 men. Many of the principal native families, being ruined by the exactions of the Musalmán tax-gatherers, betook themselves to plunder. They sheltered the banditti on their estates, levied black-mail from the surrounding villages as the price of immunity from depredation, and shared in the pillage of such as would not come to terms. Their country-houses were robber-strongholds, and the English judges of the last century have left it on record that a gang-robbery never occurred in Bengal without a landed proprietor being at the bottom of it.

Digitized by Google

Lawlessness breeds lawlessness, and the miserable peasants, stripped of their little hoards, were forced to become plunderers in their turn. "Many husbandmen," says an official report of 1771, "who have hitherto borne the first of characters among their neighbours, pursue this last resource to procure themselves a subsistence." The Council at Calcutta reported in 1772 that organised gangs of robbers were burning, plundering, and ravaging the interior districts of Bengal in bodies of 50,000 men. The English found no police in India to cope with this great evil. Each village had its watchman, but the village watchman would have been powerless against the robber-gangs, and so he entered into league with them. For a time the East India Company's troops were constantly engaged against the banditti. In 1773 we hear of our Sepoys "being totally defeated" by a robber horde, and "their English leader with the whole party cut off." But by degrees these vast armies of banditti were broken up, and scattered themselves over the country in smaller gangs.

Such lawlessness was the normal condition of all India for a full half century, and in some provinces for many centuries, before the advent of British rule. A long succession of invaders during 700 years, had crushed beneath them the preceding races. In many instances, the previous inhabitants were driven from their fields altogether and forced to take refuge in the mountains or jungles. They then became what is called in India a "depressed race," or a "predatory caste." In every province we see one or more of these depressed or vanquished races, such as the Bhars of Oudh, the Bhíls of Jalaun, the Gaulis of the central provinces, the Chandels and Bundelas of Bundelkhand, the Ahams of Assam, besides the numerous hill tribes scattered over the country. We found more than a hundred hereditary "predatory castes" or tribes in India, and many of their names are still preserved to our days in the census of 1871; that is to say, there were more than one hundred resolute communities openly living from generation to generation by plunder.

Here, then, was a great organisation of the criminal classes, which had existed from time immemorial, and which the English had to put down without the aid of any regular police. At first the Company's servants attempted to extirpate crime by copying the cruel criminal code of the Musalmáns. Warren Hastings, for example, made a law that every convicted gang-robber should be executed; that he should be executed in all the forms and terrors of the native law in his own village; that his whole family should be made slaves, and that every inhabitant of the village should be fined. The gang-robbers retaliated by incendiarism on a great scale throughout the country. In 1780 they are believed to have caused the conflagration of Calcutta which burned down 15,000 houses. Nearly 200 people perished in the flames. "A few nights ago," says a Calcutta newspaper of 1780, "four armed men entered the house of a Moorman, near Chowringhi," the principal street, "and carried off his daughter." No native ever ventured out after dusk with a good shawl on; and it was the invariable practice, even in

Digitized by Google

English mansions in Calcutta, for the porter to lock the outer door at the commencement of dinner, and not to open it again till the butler brought him word that the plate was safely shut up in its strong box. Clear cases of fire-raising are constantly recorded, and at length it was gravely "recommended that all those owning straw houses should have a long bamboo with three hooks at the end to catch the villains."

All this has changed. Strange as it may sound, there is now less crime in India than in England. That is to say, for each million persons in England and Wales there are about 870 criminals always in gaol. In India, where the police is very completely organised, there are only 614 prisoners in gaol for each million of the people. Moreover, in England and Wales there are 340 women in gaol for each million of the female population, while in India they have only twenty-eight women in gaol for each million of the female population. The petty offences, punished by a fine, are also less numerous in Bengal than in England, compared with the total number of inhabitants. The use of troops against banditti is now a thing of the past. The existence of an army is less realised in a rural district of Bengal than in an English shire. Of the sixty-three millions of people in that Province, probably forty millions go through life without ever seeing the face of a soldier.

A century of British rule has, therefore, not only secured the Indian frontier from invaders, but it has freed the interior of India from banditti. This, I think, is a work of which we may all feel proud. How has that great triumph of good government been achieved? Partly by legislation and partly by police. The English in India recognised the fact that they had a special class of crimes to deal with, and they framed a special department of criminal law to put those crimes down. "The *Dakaits* or gang-robbers of Bengal," so runs a State paper written in 1772, "are not, like the robbers of England, individuals driven to such desperate courses by sudden want. They are robbers by profession and even by birth. They are formed into regular communities, and their families subsist by the spoils which they bring home to them." These spoils were frequently brought from great distances; and peaceful villages 300 miles up the Ganges lived by housebreaking in Calcutta. A special law was therefore framed against the crime of *dakaiti*, or gang-robbery, that is to say, robbery committed by five or more persons. Another special crime was *thagi*, or strangling dexterously performed by bands of professional murderers disguised as travelling merchants or pilgrims. The *Thags* and *Dakaits*, or hereditary stranglers and gang-robbers, thought none the worse of themselves for their profession, and were regarded by their countrymen with an awe which in the last century could hardly be distinguished from respect. "I am a *Thag* or strangler of the Royal Records," one of these gentlemen was good enough to explain to an English officer: "I and my fathers have been professional stranglers for twenty generations." Accordingly special laws were framed to deal with the crime of "being a *Thag*" or professional strangler.

Digitized by Google

Special laws, however, would have done very little without special police. A separate department of the criminal administration was therefore created to deal with these wide-spread special crimes of India. It has effectively done its work. Some time ago I was taken to visit the principal gaol of one of the Indian provinces. At parting, when I was thanking the governor of the gaol for all he had shown me, he exclaimed: "Ah! there is one thing more which we must not forget to see." He took me to a well-ventilated comfortable room in the gaol hospital, where, lolling upon pillows, reclined a venerable white-bearded man. "This," he said, "is the last of our *Thags*. He alone survives of the batch which we received twenty-five years ago." I found that the venerable strangler had been for fifteen years enjoying himself in the hospital, the object of much solicitude to the doctors, and his life carefully prolonged by medical comforts, as an interesting relic of the past.

Nevertheless, this problem also presents itself from time to time, although in a mitigated form. The old predatory castes, the survivals of down-trodden, half-exterminated races under the native dynasties, still cling to their wandering life. But most of them, like the Bediyas, are now merely gipsy families who roam from village to village, earning a little rice by their singing or juggling, and by their dexterity as bird-catchers, basket-weavers, and fortune-tellers. Their boldest flight in robbery is the petty pilfering of a stray chicken or kid. In recently annexed parts of India, however, as in the province of Oudh, the old predatory clans still give trouble. A special law, entitled the Criminal Tribes Act, has accordingly been levelled against them, and is occasionally enforced. For example, in the Gonda district of Oudh, which passed under British rule only in 1855, there is a caste of professional thieves called Barwárs. They spread over the country in communities of forty or fifty, and have no objection to rob temples, but will not steal cattle. They go on more distant expeditions in parties of two or three. Their plunder is fairly divided, a portion being set apart to buy offerings of goats and ardent spirits for their patron goddess, and a fixed percentage being paid to the landholder of the village. They carry on their trade with hereditary skill; but the rules of their religion sternly restrict their operations to the daytime, between sunrise and sunset. Any Barwár stealing by night is ignominiously turned out of the caste. These scrupulous gentlemen numbered 2,500 in a single *pargana* or parish. But they have, under British rule, sunk from their ancient dignity as an hereditary robber-community, and, like my old friend the professional strangler in the gaol hospital, they are regarded with much interest by the local authorities as a relic of the past. They have been placed under the operation of the Criminal Tribes Act, and are now betaking themselves to the more commonplace callings of small husbandmen and petty pilferers. Throughout almost the whole of British India the ancient special crimes have been extirpated. The old criminal tribes find it more profitable to be on the side of the law

Digitized by Google

than against it, and now seek employment as detectives or house-watchmen. We have seen how the Indian navy, after having swept the sea of piracy, and cleared out the robber-nests at the river mouths, finished its work, and was abolished eighteen years ago. In like manner, the old lawlessness in the interior has now disappeared, and the special branch of the criminal administration, known as the *Thagi* and *Dakaiti* or Stranglers' and Gang-robbers' Department, has practically ceased from its operations in British India.

We have of late years heard a great deal about Indian famines. The heart of England has been touched by tales of suffering and privation on a vast scale, and the charity of England has flowed forth on a scale equally munificent. Famine is now recognised as one of the most difficult problems with which the Indian Administration has to deal. A hundred years ago it was regarded not as a problem of administration, but as a visitation of God utterly beyond the control of man. When the rains, on which the crops depended, fell short, no crops were reared, and the people perished. Sometimes their failure was confined to a single district, and only a few thousand families starved to death. Sometimes their failure extended to a province, and the victims were counted by hundreds of thousands. More rarely the rains failed over a still greater area, and, as in 1770, ten millions of people perished. The loss of life was accepted in each case as a natural and an inevitable consequence of the loss of the crop. The earth had yielded no food, and so the people, in the ordinary and legitimate course of things, died. The famine of 1837 left behind so terrible a memory, that to this day the peasants of Hamirpur employ it as an era by which to calculate their ages.

Here is a bird's-eye view of a single famine in the last century, taken almost word for word from the official records. "The fields of rice," one of the native superintendents of Bengal reported in the autumn of 1769, "are become like fields of dried straw." "The mortality," wrote the President of the Bengal Council in the following spring—"the mortality, the beggary exceed all description. Above one-third of the inhabitants have perished in the once plentiful province of Purniah, and in other parts the misery is equal." All through the stifling summer of 1770 the people went on dying. The husbandmen sold their cattle; they sold their implements of agriculture; they devoured their seed-grain; they sold their sons and daughters, till at length no buyer of children could be found; they ate the leaves of trees and the grass of the field; and in June 1770 the Resident at the Darbar affirmed that the living were feeding on the dead. Day and night a torrent of famished and disease-stricken wretches poured into the great cities. At an early period of the year, pestilence had broken out. In March we find small-pox at Murshidábád, where it glided through the viceregal guards, and cut off the Prince Syfut in his palace. The streets were blocked up with promiscuous heaps of the dying and dead. Interment could not do its work quick enough; even the dogs and jackals, the public scavengers of the East, became unable to accomplish their revolting work, and the multi-

Digitized by Google

tude of mangled and festering corpses at length threatened the existence of the citizens.

Two years after the dearth, Warren Hastings made a progress through Bengal, and he deliberately states the loss to have been "at least one-third of the inhabitants," or probably about ten millions of people. Nineteen years later, the next Governor-General, Lord Cornwallis, had still to report to the Court of Directors that one-third of the Company's territory in Bengal was "a jungle inhabited only by wild beasts."

In that terrible summer of 1770, in which ten millions of peasants perished, only 9,000*l.* were distributed to aid the starving population of Bengal. A century later, in the much milder Bengal scarcity of 1874, the British Government spent close on four millions sterling, and during the last five years, ending 1878, it has devoted over fourteen millions sterling to feeding its people during famine. Here is one great difference between the last century and the present one. But it is by no means the most important difference. In the last century, neither the Government nor the people thought that it was possible to deal with a great Indian famine. Any such efforts were, in the words of the Bengali proverb, merely *watering the top of a tree whose roots were cut.* In the present century, earnest efforts have been made to bring famine within administrative control. A vast organisation of preventive and remedial agencies is constantly kept in readiness to deal with the periodically recurring dearths. Canals, irrigation works of many kinds, railways, roads, steamboats, and every improved form of modern communication, together with State charity in India and the munificent benevolence of the British nation at home—these are the weapons with which the Indian Government now does battle against famine.

That battle is not yet won. Many Indian administrators of great experience, both English and native, still believe that, when a real famine has once developed itself, it is impossible to prevent a terrible loss of life. This is a subject which will require very faithful dealing. The temptation in modern times is not to grudge State aid during famine, but to lavish the public funds with an open hand, so that each official may be able to say that nothing which money could accomplish for the starving population was left undone. The problem of Indian famine is still unsolved; but it has been accepted by all earnest administrators as one for which we must anxiously labour to find a solution. Permanent depopulation from any cause is now unknown. No frontier belt is left waste through fear of invasions from the north, no provinces are swept clean by Marhatta cavalry from the south, no villages are laid waste by internal banditti, and no fields are now left bare of inhabitants through famine. In the last century all these causes of depopulation were at work. The quick-growing jungle spread over the deserted land, and the fierce beasts of the tropics were the undisputed lords of fertile tracts. In the old revenue accounts of the native Government during the last century, there was a column in each district for *palâtika* or deserted lands,

Digitized by Google

literally "the lands from which the people had fled." Even ten years after the famine of 1770, a once populous district was a silent jungle; and in 1780 a small body of Sepoys could with difficulty force its way through its forests. "For 120 miles," says an eye-witness, "they marched through but an extensive wood, all the way a perfect wilderness; sometimes a small village presented itself in the midst of these jungles, with a little cultivated ground around it, hardly sufficient to encamp the two battalions. These woods abound with tigers and bears, which infested the camp every night, but did no other damage than carrying off a child and killing some of the gentlemen's baggage-bullocks."

As the rural communities relinquished their hamlets and drew closer together towards the centre of a district, the wild beasts pressed hungrily on their rear. In vain the East India Company offered a reward for each tiger's head sufficient to maintain a peasant's family in comfort for three months; an item of outlay which our officers deemed so important that when, in the financial crisis of 1790–91, the Treasury had to suspend all payments, it made the tiger money and diet allowance for prisoners the sole exceptions to the rule. In vain it spent the whole land-revenue of a frontier district in rewards for killing wild beasts. A belt of jungle filled with ferocious animals lay for years around the cultivated land. The official records frequently speak of the mail-bag being carried off by tigers, and the custom of the mail-runners carrying jangling rings or bells to scare away the wild beasts survived to our own day. Lord Cornwallis, in 1789, had to sanction a grant of public money to free the military road from the depredations of these animals.

The ravages of the wild elephants were on a larger scale, and their extermination formed one of the most important duties of the British officers after the country passed under our rule. Tigers, leopards, and wolves slew their thousands of men and their hundreds of thousands of cattle. But the herd of wild elephants was absolutely resistless, lifting off roofs, pushing down walls, trampling a village under foot as if it were a city of sand which a child had built upon the shore. In two parishes alone, during the last few years of the native administration, fifty-six hamlets with their surrounding lands "had all been destroyed and gone to jungle, caused by the depredations of wild elephants." Another official return states that forty market villages throughout Bírbhúm district had been deserted from the same cause. Large reductions had to be made in the land-tax, and the East India Company borrowed tame elephants from the native Viceroy's stud in order to catch the wild ones. "I had ocular proof on my journey," writes an English officer in 1791, "of their ravages. The poor timid native ties his cot in a tree, to which he retires when the elephants approach, and silently views the destruction of his cottage and the whole profits of his labour." "One night," writes an English surveyor in 1810, "although I had a guard, the men of the village close to my tent retired to the trees, and the women hid themselves among the cattle, leaving their huts a prey to the elephants, who know very well where to look for grain. Two nights before, some

Digitized by Google

of them had unroofed a hut in the village, and had eaten up all the grain which a poor family possessed." "Most fortunately for the population of the country," wrote the greatest elephant-hunter of the last century, "they delight in the sequestered range of the mountains; if they preferred the plains, whole kingdoms would be laid waste."

All this is now changed. One of the complaints of the modern Englishman in India is that he can so seldom get a shot at a tiger. Wolves are dying out in many provinces; the ancient Indian lion has disappeared. The wild elephant is so rare that he is specially protected by the Government, and in most parts of India he can only be caught by official license or under official supervision. Many districts have petitioned for a close season, so as to preserve the edible game still remaining. The only animal that has defied the energy of the British official is the snake. One may, however, judge of the loss of life by wild beasts in the last century from the deaths caused by this, their chief survivor at the present day. The ascertained number of persons who died from snake-bite in 1875 was 17,000, out of a total of 21,391 killed by snakes and all other wild animals. The deaths from wild beasts in the last century were probably not under 150,000 a year.

I shall now briefly summarise some of the outward and most visible results of a century of British rule. As regards the northern or Himalayan frontier of India, the wild hill tribes are no longer invaders, but are employed as loyal soldiers or border police. As regards the southern frontier of India, the sea, the pirate races have been converted into cheap and excellent seamen. Indian waters are now as safe as the English Channel, and the Indian navy, having finished its work, is disbanded. As regards internal disturbances, banditti are unknown, breaches of the law are rarer in India than in England, and the special department which was created to deal with the old special crimes of India now finds no more work to do within the British provinces. Famine, which in the last century was considered beyond any help of man, has been accepted as the great administrative problem of our day; and a vast organisation of public works, State relief, and private charity, is interposed between the Indian races and the merciless calamities of nature. As regards the reclamation of waste land, formerly the local hero, or eponymous village-founder, was the man who cut down the jungle; now a special branch of legislation is required to enable the Government to conserve what jungle remains, and to plant fresh forests. These are a few of the outward and visible results of a century of British rule in India. In the February number of the CORNHILL we shall examine some of its less obvious but equally important consequences. We shall find that, great as has been the success of our countrymen in establishing peace and security throughout the rural provinces of India, they have accomplished a far more difficult task, and won even more glorious results, in the social emancipation, the industrial progress, and the moral enlightenment of the people.

W. W. HUNTER, LL.D.

Digitized by Google

A New Study of Tennyson.

THOSE who may happen to be familiar with the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius will remember that one of the most delightful episodes in that pleasant work are the two books in which Eustathius and Furius Albinus estimate the extent of Virgil's obligations to his predecessors. Eustathius having concluded a long and elaborate review of the passages in the Greek poets of which the great Roman had availed himself, Furius Albinus proceeds to trace him through Latin literature. He was half afraid, he said, to produce the formidable list of passages appropriated by the poet, because he might be exposing his favourite "to the censure of the malignant and unlearned." Remembering, however, that such parallels as he was about to point out have been common to poets of all ages, and haughtily observing that what Virgil condescended to borrow became him much more than the original owner—to say nothing of that owner becoming in some cases immortalised by the theft—Furius plunges into his theme. Between them these Langbaines of the fifth century made Conington very uncomfortable towards the end of the nineteenth; but if their disclosures have materially impaired Virgil's claims to originality, they have illustrated his faultless taste, his nice artistic sense, his delicate touch, his consummate literary skill. They initiated a new branch of study, they divulged a fruitful secret.

Without going so far as the thief in *Albumazar*, when he says,

> This poet is that poet's plagiary,
> And he a third's till they all end in Homer,

it is still interesting and necessary to remember that there have appeared in all literatures, at a certain point in their development, a class of poets who are essentially imitative and reflective. They have usually been men possessed of great natural ability, extensive culture, refined taste, minute and comprehensive acquaintance with the literature which preceded them; they have occasionally been men endowed with some of the most precious attributes of original genius. The poets of Alexandria, the epic and elegiac poets of Rome, are the most striking types of this class in ancient times. Torquato Tasso, Gray, and Mr. Tennyson are, perhaps, the most striking types in the modern world. Of all these Virgil, Tasso, and the Laureate are undoubtedly the most distinguished. In addition, however, to their exquisite and peculiar beauties, which must of course be obvious to every one, they are all three of them preeminently learned. Their work has a twofold value; it has—to borrow an expression from the schools—not only an exoteric but an esoteric interest. To sit down, for instance, to the study of the *Eclogues*, the

Digitized by Google

Georgics, and the *Æneid*, without being familiar with the illustrative masterpieces of Greek poetry and the fragments of old Roman literature, would be like travelling through a country rich with historical traditions and splendid with poetical associations without possessing any sense of either. The uncritical spectator might be satisfied with the sensuous glory of the scenery, the simple loveliness of cloud and landscape, and the thousand effects of contrast and perspective; but an enlightened man would feel something very like contempt for one who, with the Ilyssus and the Mincio whispering at his feet, was sensible only of the natural beauties of the landscape round him. Nature has indeed made one world, Art another. Mr. Tennyson has now, by general consent, taken his place among English classics; he too will have, like Virgil and Tasso, his critics and his commentators; and, unless we are much mistaken, one of the most important and fruitful departments of their labour will be that of tracing his obligations to his predecessors, of illustrating his wondrous assimilative skill, his tact, his taste, his learning. John de Peyrarede once observed that he knew no task more instructive than to compare Virgil's adaptations of Homer with the original passages—to note what details he rejected, what he added, what he softened down, what he thought proper to heighten. It was a perpetual study of the principles of good taste. In full confidence that what applies to Virgil in this case applies with equal justice to the work of our Laureate, we propose to devote a few pages to the subject, by way of inaugurating a branch of Tennysonian research which must necessarily be gradual and cumulative, but which will sooner or later become indispensable to a proper appreciation of his services to art. Every Englishman must be quite as jealous of the fame of the Laureate as our old friend Furius Albinus was of the fame of his beloved Virgil, and we have in truth as little fear as honest Furius of our remarks being construed into an insinuation of plagiarism against a great and noble poet.

We begin with *In Memoriam*. First will come the general scheme of the whole composition; secondly, the versification; thirdly, the examination of particular passages. The general scheme of the work is undoubtedly suggested by the series of sonnets and canzoni dedicated by Petrarch to the memory of Laura. Not only do the several divisions into which *In Memoriam* may be supposed to fall correspond with the divisions into which Petrarch's series may be fancifully divided, but the whole method and purpose of the two poets would seem to be precisely similar. *In Memoriam* may be not improperly described as an analytical study of the psychology of sorrow, and this assuredly is equally true of Petrarch's poems. In ninety-eight short pieces the Italian reiterates, now in tones of tempered grief, now of rapturous gratitude or pensive grateful retrospect, the truth so well put by his English pupil:—

> 'Tis better to have loved and lost
> Than never to have loved at all.

He tells how his earthly love for an earthly object, with fertile tem-

Digitized by Google

poral blessings though it was, has by death become transformed and purified. So exactly indeed do these two works correspond, that the parallel is not at all broken by the fact that the Italian is speaking of the love between man and woman, while the English poet is speaking of the friendship between man and man. If we except the religious speculations, the mysticism, and the modern scientific allusions of *In Memoriam*, it would not perhaps be too much to say that the germs at least of almost every section are to be found scattered up and down the *Sonetti e Canzoni in Morte di Madonna Laura*. A minute comparison between Petrarch and Mr. Tennyson, though it would amply repay minute investigation, and may some day become necessary, must be reserved for another place. We are by no means disposed to underrate Petrarch, but we hope the shade of Leopardi will forgive us for saying that the English poet has far surpassed the Laureate of Laura, even in his own peculiar style.

A great deal has been written about the versification of *In Memoriam*, and it has usually been stated that the scheme of its metre was borrowed from Ben Jonson (*Underwoods*, xxxix.; or *Catiline*, act ii., Chorus) or Sandys. Now it must be obvious to any one who has any ear that the rough and jolting verses of Jonson, utterly deficient in rhythm and cadence, supposing they did suggest the stanza, could have suggested nothing but the bald outline. They hold, in truth, about the same relationship to the matchless mechanism of the *In Memoriam* stanza as the hexameters of the *Iliad* hold to the hexameters of *Evangeline*. We once thought that the peculiarly beautiful cæsura effect which characterises the versification of Mr. Tennyson's poem was to be numbered among his many debts to Wordsworth. See the *Affliction of Margaret*. This poem, though not in the Tennysonian quatrain, has exactly the same cadence; but there can be no doubt that the measure, the hint of the cadence, and indeed the whole cast of the metre have been taken from a very rare volume, scarcely known even to professed students of our early poetry—the occasional verses of Lord Herbert of Cherbury. Some of Herbert's stanzas are so similar to *In Memoriam*, that even a nice ear might excusably mistake one or two of them for the Laureate's. They occur in a piece entitled *An Ode upon the Question, whether Love should continue for ever*:—

Oh! no, beloved, I am most sure
  These virtuous habits we acquire,
  As being with the soul entire,
Must with it evermore endure.

Else should our souls in vain elect,
  And vainer yet were Heaven's laws,
  When to an everlasting cause
They give a perishing effect.

Not here on earth, then, nor above,
  Our good affections can impair;
  For where God doth admit the fair,
Think you that He excludeth love?

Digitized by Google

These eyes again thine eyes shall see,
  These hands again thine hands enfold,
  And all chaste blessings can be told
Shall with us everlasting be.

For if no use of sense remain
  When bodies once this life forsake,
  Or they could no delight partake,
Why should they ever rise again?

Let then no doubt, Celinda, touch,
  Much less your fairest mind invade;
  Were not our souls immortal made,
Our equal loves can make them such.

It seems a pity that this rare volume should not have found some one enterprising enough to reprint it. Lord Herbert's fame as a prose writer would have sufficed to carry off verses much less excellent than these.

The noble verses which open *In Memoriam* are obviously a transfusion, so to speak, of some verses of Lord Herbert's brother, George Herbert, who appears to be a favourite with the Laureate. A comparison of Herbert's first stanza with the opening of Mr. Tennyson's poem will at once illustrate the fine art of the latter poet, and the peculiar manner in which he has, more or less unconsciously no doubt, availed himself of his predecessor's poem.

Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,

. . . . . .

Thine are these orbs of light and shade:
  Thou madest life in man and brute;
  Thou madest Death, and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which Thou hast made.

Immortal Love, Author of this great frame,
  Sprung from that beauty which can never fade,
How hath man parcell'd out Thy glorious name,
  And thrown it on the dust which Thou hast made!

. . . . . .

HERBERT, *Love.*

Whether I fly with angels, fall with dust,
Thy hands made both, and I am there.

And Thou hast made him: Thou art just.

In Mem.

And God has promised: He is just.

HERBERT, *The Discharge.*

Our little systems have their day,

. . . . . .

And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

In Mem.

Lord, though we change, Thou art the same.

HERBERT, *Whit-Sunday.*

Digitized by Google

That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music.
In Mem.

That so Thy favours, granting my request,
They and my mind may chime.
HERBERT. *Denial.*

Confusions of a wasted youth.

This curious use of the word is in *Vaughan the Silurist* :—

These dark *confusions* that within me rest (*Dressing*).

It would of course be absurd to assert that these resemblances are conscious imitations, but, as they lie within the compass of forty-four lines, they are at least curious enough to be pointed out. A striking instance of Mr. Tennyson's happy power of enriching and elaborating the rough material of others is seen in the use he has made of a passage in which Cowper (*Task*, book vi. lines 88–99) draws a distinction between knowledge and wisdom :—

Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have ofttimes no connection: knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which Wisdom builds,
Till smooth'd, and squared, and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber when it should enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.

Now mark how this is reproduced *more suo* by Mr. Tennyson (*In Memoriam*, cxiv.) :

Who loves not Knowledge?
. . . . . .
Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire;
She sets her forward countenance,
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.
. . . . . .
Let her know her place:
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain, and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With Wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly, of the mind;
But Wisdom heavenly, of the soul.

Cowper is again recalled in lxxxiii. :—

Laburnums dropping-wells of fire—

suggested perhaps by *Task*, vi. 149 :

Laburnum,
Rich in *streaming gold*,

Digitized by Google

As our list will be a long one, it will perhaps be well to put down the imitations, adaptations, or resemblances, without making any regular running commentary, though we may presume that those from the Greek and Roman classics were intentional.

Never morning wore
To evening but some heart did break. (vi.)

from Lucretius:

Nec nox ulla diem neque noctem Aurora secuta est,
Quæ non audierit mixtos vagitibus ægris
Ploratus.

His heavy-shotted hammock shroud
Drops in his *vast and wandering* grave. (*Id.*)

from Shakspeare, *Richard III.* act i. sc. 3:

To seek the empty *vast and wandering* air.

And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land. (xviii.)

Persius, *Sat.* i. 39:

Nunc non e tumulo fortunataque *favilla*
Nascentur violæ?

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
And *staggers blindly* ere she sink. (xvi.)

For this graphic touch see Napier, *History of the Peninsular War* (Battle of Albuera):

The Fusileer battalions, struck by the iron tempest, *reeled and staggered like a sinking ship.*

The beautiful euphemism "to cease," for to die (xxxiv.), is of course from Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*:

To cease upon the midnight with no pain.

'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all. (xxvii.)

Congreve, *Way of the World*, act ii. sc. 2:

'Tis better to have been left than never to have been loved.

Or possibly, as has been before suggested by Thackeray, *Pendennis*, vol. i. chap. vi.—"It is best to love wisely no doubt, but to love foolishly is better than not to be able to love at all."

The *moanings* of the *homeless* sea. (xxxv.)

This splendid line is partly from Horace, *Ode* ii. 20:

Visam *gementis* litora *Bospori*;

partly from Shelley's "*homeless* streams," described in *Alastor*.

Like *light* in many a *shiver'd lance*
That *breaks* about the dappled pools.

Cf. Mr. Browning's *Pauline*:

Tall trees overarch to keep us in,
Breaking the *sunbeams* into emerald *shafts*.

Digitized by Google

No lapse of moons can canker love. (xxvi.)

Shakspeare, *Sonnet* cxvi. :

Love's not Time's fool;

. . . . . .

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks.

There must be wisdom with great death. (li.)

is the versification of an idea which Sir Thomas Browne has in his *Religio Medici* thrown into many forms. Milton has described Death as the "keeper of the keys of all creeds," and Pope as "the great teacher."

My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought,

from Persius, *Sat.* i. 104 :

Summa delumbe saliva
Hoc natat in labris.

And *ave, ave, ave* said
Adieu, adieu for evermore.

Catullus, *Car.* ci. :

Atque *in perpetuum* frater *ave atque vale.*

In shadowy thoroughfares of thought

was obviously inspired by that weird line in Sophocles, so infinite in its suggestiveness—

Πολλὰς δ' ὁδοὺς ἐλθόντα φροντίδος πλάνοις—

on which Shelley has written an admirable commentary.

With the *breeze of song.* (lxxv.)

This is Pindar's (*Pythian* iv. 5) οὖρος ὕμνων.

Take wings of fancy and ascend, (lxxvi.)

from Petrarch, *Sonnet* lxxxii. :

Volo con *l' ali de' pensieri* al cielo.

The whole spirit of lxxvii. is from Petrarch, Sonnet *In Morte di Laura*, xxv. :

My darkened ways
Shall ring with music all the same:
To breathe my loss is more than fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

E certo ogni mio studio in quel temp' era
Pur di sfogare il doloroso core
In qualche modo, non d' acquistar fama.
Pianger cercai, non già del pianto onore.

In lxxxv. it would seem that the passage beginning

But Summer on the steaming floods,

was inspired by that heavenly sonnet of Petrarch's numbered xi. So also lxxxviii. is as obviously moulded on Dante, *Sonnet* xxv. A writer in *Notes and Queries* has also drawn attention to the singularly close resemblance between section lxxvi. and section lxxii. and the *Purgatorio*, canto xi. 91–106.

Ora che 'l mondo si adorna e veste—&c.

Digitized by Google

How pure at heart and sound in head—&c. (xciv.)

The whole of this piece is little else than a translation of the noble passage about the mood in which man is fitted for communion with his God in Jeremy Taylor's Fifth Golden Grove Sermon. In c. and ci. we find again the inspiration of Laura's lover—see sonnets xlii. and xliv.—though the exquisite descriptive touches are all Mr. Tennyson's.

The violet comes, but we are gone, (cv.)

is, of course, an epitome of the celebrated passage in Moschus' third *Idyll*, 100–105.

In cvii. the parody from Alcæus and Horace is obvious. In cxxvii. "the brute earth" is Horace's "bruta tellus," or perhaps directly from *Comus*, 797:

And the brute earth would lend her nerves—

as the "glorious lies" is probably a mistranslation of Plato's θεῖα ψευδῆ.

We will now go on to collate other parallel passages at random up and down Mr. Tennyson's poems, though we do not propose to trace his obligations to Shelley and Keats, as they would of themselves form an interesting paper.

I *earth in earth* forget these empty courts (*Tithonus*).

This happy Hellenism is in Stephen Hawes' *Pastime of Pleasure*, capit. xlv.:

When *earth in earth* hath ta'en his corrupt taste.

The slow, sweet hours that bring us all things good;
The slow, sweet hours that bring us all things ill,
And all good things from evil.—*Love and Duty.*

Imitated, apparently, from Theocritus, *Idyll* xv. 104–5:

Βάρδισται μακάρων Ὧραι φίλαι, ἀλλὰ ποθειναὶ
Ἔρχονται, πάντεσσι βροτοῖσιν ἀεί τι φοροῖσαι.

Again, in the same poem, the lovers' meeting irresistibly reminds us of a similar scene in Wordsworth's *Vandracour and Julia*. Take two passages:

The summer night, that paus'd
Among her stars to hear us: stars that hung
Love-charm'd to listen—all the wheels of Time
Spun round in station; but the end had come.—*Love and Duty.*

The galaxy display'd
Her fires, that like mysterious pulses beat
Aloft—momentous but uneasy bliss;
To their full hearts the universe seemed hung
On that brief meeting's slender filament.—WORDSWORTH.

In this passage Mr. Tennyson has scarcely improved his model; but in another, for the germ of which it would seem that he was also indebted to that consummate master of language, he certainly has. There are few passages in our literature so perfect in onomatopœic effect as the following:

Digitized by Google

Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on slippery crag that rang
Sharp smitten.—*Passing of Arthur.*

Now compare Wordsworth:

With the din
Meanwhile the precipices rang aloud,
The leafless trees, and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron.

As we have alluded to the *Passing of Arthur*, we may, omitting the obvious Homeric and Virgilian imitations, notice a very singular appropriation or coincidence. The two fine lines—

For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God—

are the versification of a sentence from Archdeacon Hare's sermon on the *Law of Self-Sacrifice*:

This is the golden chain of love whereby the whole creation is bound to the throne of the Creator.

The lovely stanza in the verse to "J. S."—

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun
And dwells in heaven—

may have been distilled from two lines in Dryden's noble tragedy of *Don Sebastian*, act i. scene 1:

If I fall,
I shall be like myself; a setting sun
Should leave a track of glory in the skies.

The cynical aspiration of the young hero in *Locksley Hall*, that he might "burst all links of habit," "take some savage woman who should rear his dusky race," be mated with a squalid savage, so get more enjoyment than he could hope for in this march of mind, finds a curious parallel in Beaumont's *Philaster*, act iv. sc. 2:

Oh, that I had been nourish'd in the woods,
. . . . and not known
The right of crowns, nor the dissembling trains
Of women's looks . . . . .
And then had taken me some mountain girl,
Beaten with winds, that might have strewed my bed
With leaves and reeds, and have borne at her big breasts
My large coarse issue. This had been a life
Free from vexation.

The Elizabethan dramatists have also furnished the germ of a fine passage in the *Dream of Fair Women*. Cleopatra says:

Digitized by Google

Once, like the moon, I made
The ever-shifting currents of the blood,
According to my humour, ebb and flow.

What says Susan Carter to Frank in Ford's *Witch of Edmonton?* act ii. sc. 2—

You are the powerful moon of my blood's sea,
To make it ebb and flow into my face,
As your looks change.

Ye may ne see for peeping flowers the grass,

writes George Peele, in that loveliest of pastoral dramas, *The Arraignment of Paris.*

You scarce could see the grass for flowers,

echoes Mr. Tennyson (*Two Voices*).

For the fine idea at the end of *Œnone*, it would seem also that he is indebted to another of the Elizabethan dramatists, and, with due deference to the genius of the later poet, how feebly do his verses echo the massive majesty of Shakspeare's greatest follower!

What this may be, I know not, but I know
That whereso'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire.—Tennyson, *Œnone.*

Now for Webster:

The heaven o'er my head seems made of molten brass,
The earth of flaming sulphur.—*Duchess of Malfi*, act iv. sc. 2.

As we have mentioned *Œnone*, we will go on to point out the passages on which Mr. Tennyson has—to use Addison's favourite phrase—had his eye:

Now the noon-day quiet holds the hill

is a *literal* translation of a line in Callimachus, *Lavacrum Palladis*, 72:

μεσαμβρινὰ δ' εἶχ' ὄρος ἀσυχία.

The next line,

The *lizard*, with his shadow on *the stone*,
Rests like a shadow,

was doubtless suggested by a line in that exquisite Idyll in Theocritus (the seventh), of which Mr. Tennyson has availed himself elsewhere:

Ἀνίκα δὴ καὶ σαῦρος ἐφ' αἱμασιαῖσι καθεύδει.

The whole of the beautiful passage—

And at their feet the *crocus* brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotus and lilies.

. . . . . .

And o'er him flowed a *golden cloud*, and leaned
Upon him, *slowly dropping fragrant dew*—

is taken, with one or two additions and alterations in the names of the flowers, from *Iliad*, xiv. 347–352, with a reminiscence, no doubt, of the gorgeous passage in *Paradise Lost*, bk. iv. 695–702.

Nor is the happy touch about the crocus breaking like fire original,

Digitized by Google

being simply a version of Sophocles' χρυσαυγὴς κρόκος (*Œdip. Col.* 685) with a memory perhaps of Wordsworth's flowers that set *the hills on fire* (*Ruth*).

Few tasks would be more pleasant than to follow the Laureate step by step through the Arthurian poems, comparing them with the original romance, of which he has of course made the same use as Shakspeare made of Holinshed's *Chronicles*. Here, however, we must confine ourselves to a very few illustrations. The whole of *Elaine* is taken, with the exception of the ornaments and illustrative poetical matter, from part iii. chapters cxxiii. and cxxiii., while much of the tone of the Fourth *Æneid* has been *transfused* into it. In like manner the *Passing of Arthur* is derived from part iii. chapters clvii. clviii.; but all the sublimity and weirdness of the Laureate's splendid description of the battle is his own. It is possible that he may have borrowed the horror of the mist from some account of the battle of Barnet, which was fought under circumstances similar to those of Arthur's last fight. How closely he sometimes follows his original may be illustrated by one or two quotations. Of Lancelot, the History says, chapter clxxvi.:

> Thou wert the *goodliest* person that ever came among press of knights, and thou wert the meekest man and the gentlest that ever eat in hall among ladies.

> Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the *goodliest* man
> *That ever among ladies ate in hall,*
> And noblest.

Again:

> And then he threw the sword into the water as far as he might, and there came an arm and an hand above the water and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished it.—*History.*

> And clutch'd the sword,
> But ere he dipt the surface rose an arm,
> And caught him by the hilt and brandish'd him
> Three times.

The passage beginning "Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge," is taken with literal exactness from the *History*. But how gloriously has the Laureate transformed its bald simplicity here, as everywhere else, with the alchemy of his genius! Again, in *Elaine* he follows very closely the old romance, as may be seen by comparing the two following passages (*The Original*):—

> And this was the letter, most noble knight, my Lord Sir Launcelot Du Lac. I was your lover, that men called the fair maid of Astolat. Therefore unto all ladies I make moan: yet for my soul that ye pray and bury me at the least. Pray for my soul, Sir Launcelot, as thou art a knight peerless.

Now compare with this *Elaine*, from line "Most noble Lord" to "As thou art a knight peerless."

In the verses to "J. S.," the beautiful phrase about tears—

> Dew
> *Drawn from the spirit through the brain*—

Digitized by Google

is borrowed from the matchless Alcaic stanza of Gray's on tears—

> O lacrymarum fons tenero sacros
> *Ducentium ortus ex animo.*

Mr. Tennyson's classical imitations are always singularly happy. We may instance his use of Homer's κύμα κωφόν (*Il.* xiv. 16), in

> The blind wave feeling round his long sea-hall
> In silence;

his imitation from Virgil (*Æn.* iv. 530)—

> Ever failed to draw
> The quiet night into her blood (*Geraint and Enid*)—

to whom also he is indebted for the model of the passage in *Elaine*—

> Death, like a friend's voice, &c.;

for

> O noble breast and all-puissant arms;

and

> This way and that dividing the swift mind (*Morte d'Arthur*);

as well as many other passages obvious to the scholar. In truth, the Poet Laureate's debts to Homer and Virgil would make in themselves an interesting dissertation. In *Eleanore* he has laid both Sappho and Horace under contribution. To the latter he is indebted for the beautiful picture and the suggestive touch in—

> His bow-string slackened languid love,
> Leaning his cheek upon his hand, &c.

Compare—

> Aderat querenti
> Perfidum ridens Venus, *et remisso*
> Filius arcu.

To the former he is indebted for all the passage which succeeds "My heart a charmed slumber keeps," which is an *almost literal translation* of the greater part of Sappho's incomparable ode, filtered perhaps through Catullus.

The two exquisite lines in *Mariana*—

> Her tears fell with the dews at even,
> Her tears fell ere the dews were dried—

were evidently adapted from two lines scarcely less beautiful, which indicate the loss poetry has received in the destruction of the works of Cinna.

> Te matutinus flentem conspexit Eous,
> Te flentem paulo vidit post Hesperus idem.

We have often thought the lines in the *Welcome to Alexandra*—

> For Saxon or Dane or Norman are we,
> Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,
> We are each of us Dane in our welcome of thee,

singularly happy; but we find that the Laureate has been anticipated in

Digitized by Google

his exquisite adulation by Martial De Spectaculis (Epig. iii.), enumerating the various nations which welcome Cæsar home. He concludes—

> Vox diversa sonat populorum, est vox tamen una
> Cum verus patriæ diceris esse pater.

The happy comparison in *Enid*—

> And arms on which the standing muscle slop'd
> As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone—

is taken, with an ingenious and happy turn in the image, from Theocritus (Idyll xxii.)—

> ἐν δὲ μύες στερεοῖσι βραχίοισιν ἄκρον ὑπ' ὦμον
> ἕστασαν ἠΰτε πέτροι ὁλοίτροχοι, οὔς τε κυλίνδων
> χειμάρρους ποταμὸς μεγάλαις περιέξεσε δίναις.

The adaptations from Theocritus in the passage beginning "All the land . . . . smelt of the coming summer," to the end of the paragraph, in *The Gardener's Daughter*, must be obvious to every scholar.

> The gods themselves cannot recall their gifts (*Tithonus*)

is, of course, from Agathon, as quoted by Aristotle (*Eth. N.* vi. 2)—

> μόνου γὰρ αὐτοῦ καὶ θεὸς στερίσκεται,
> ἀγένητα ποιεῖν ἅσσ' ἂν ᾖ πεπραγμένα.

The beautiful lines in *Lucretius*—

> The gods who haunt
> The lucid interspace of world and world
> Where never creeps a cloud, &c.,

and the lines in the *Morte d'Arthur* describing Avilion—

> Where falls nor hail nor rain nor any snow, &c.;

are of course closely modelled on *Odyssey* vi. 42–45, and on the lines 18–22 in the third book of the *De Rerum Naturâ*. We may also notice the curious coincidence between the verses in the epilogue—

> And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log
> That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue.

And Dante, *Paradiso*, canto xviii.—

> Nel percuoter de' ciocchi arsi
> Surgono innumerabili faville.

The burden of Elaine's song—

> Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel,

reminds us of Dante's—

> Però giri fortuna la sua ruota
> Come le piace.—*Inferno*, xv. 95.

The couplet—

> As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
> And flushes all the cheek (*Dream of Fair Women*),

would certainly seem to have been suggested by a passage in the *Hymn to Hermes*—

Digitized by Google

ὡς δ' ὅποτ' ὠκὺς νόημα διὰ στέρνοιο περήσῃ
Ἄνερος . . . .
αἱ δέ τε δινηθῶσιν ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν ἀμαρυγαί.

The weird and graphic touch in *Locksley Hall*—

And *an eye* shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain,

forcibly recalls the similarly strange and happy use of *ὄμμα* in Sophocles, *Electra*, 902—

ἐμπαίει τί μοι
ψυχῇ ξύνηθες ὄμμα.

We may mention in passing that another beautiful expression in *Locksley Hall*—

Such an one do I remember *when to look at was to love*—

would seem to have been adapted from Burns:

But *to see her was to love her,*
Love but her and love for ever.

But we have lingered long enough among imitations from the Greek and Latin poets, and will collect a few more parallels from English literature, miscellaneously selected.

When Ilion *like a mist rose into towers* (*Tithonus*)

is a memory of Milton's pandemonium (*Par. Lost*, book i.):

Out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation.

In *Maud* (iv.) there is a fine image and idea borrowed apparently from Mr. Fitzgerald's splendid version of the *Rubaiyât* of Omar, where life is compared to a chess-board, and men to the pieces on the board.

Do we move ourselves, or are we moved by an unseen man at a game
That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?

In Mr. Fitzgerald's work we find men described as

Impotent pieces of the game he plays
Upon this chequer board of nights and days,
. . . . . .
And one by one back in the closet lays.

The picturesque touch in the *Princess*—

Their morions *wash'd with morning*—

recalls forcibly Mr. Browning's *Florence*—

Wash'd by the *morning's water-gold.—Old Pictures at Florence.*

Curiously enough, the plot of *The Princess* seems to have been suggested by Dr. Johnson.

Digitized by Google

The princess thought that of all sublunary things knowledge was the best; she desired first to learn all sciences, and then purposed to found a college of learned women in which she would preside.—Rasselas, ch. xlix.

The memorable couplet in *The Brook*—

> Men may come and men may go, &c.—

recalls the old inscription on an Italian sun-dial—

> Io vado et vengo ogni giorno,
> Ma tu andrai senza ritorno.

In the verses entitled *Nothing will die*, the lines—

> The world was never made;
> It will change, but it will not fade—

are, of course, from Shelley's *Cloud*—

> I change, but I cannot die.

Here we must pause, though we have by no means exhausted our list of these interesting and instructive parallel passages. It would be absurd and presumptuous to conclude that any of the similarities which have been pointed out were deliberate or even conscious imitations. In Mr. Tennyson's own noble words, we moderns are "the heirs of all the ages." We live amid wealth as prodigally piled up as the massive and innumerable treasure-trove of Spenser's "rich strond." We have inherited the splendours of the literatures of Greece, of Rome, of Italy, and of the illustrious dynasties of English genius, and we know no task more delightful than that of tracing the resemblances between them. This is not the place for discussing the characteristics of Mr. Tennyson's genius, but thus much we may surely hazard without any fear of being mistaken for insensible critics. If ever there was a poet who might say with Horace—

> Ego apis Matinæ
> More modoque
> Grata carpentis thyma per laborem
> Plurimum . . . operosa
> Carmina fingo—

"Like the bee of Matina feeding with endless toil on the sweet thyme, what I compose I compose with elaborate care"—it surely would be the Laureate. And who would not regard with curious interest the flowers from which his nectar has been drawn? It has been observed of Virgil—and observed with justice—that he never fails to improve what he borrows, though Homer was his creditor. The same will almost universally apply to Tennyson—*nihil tetigit quod non ornavit*—what he does still betters what is done.

J. C. C.

Digitized by Google

The Countess Adelcrantz.

I.

This is the curse of life! that not
  A nobler, calmer train
Of wiser thoughts and feelings blot
  Our passions from our brain;
But each day brings its petty dust
  Our soon-choked souls to fill;
And we forget because we must,
  And not because we will.

All yesterday afternoon those lines haunted me, and I kept on repeating them to myself with an inward protest against their application to my own case and a plea that, if the dust of five-and-twenty years had settled a little upon certain treasured memories of mine, it did not lie so thick but that the merest glimpse of old associations was sufficient to brush it away. It was no good: my conscience somehow wouldn't listen to the protest nor accept the excuse. If I had been at home in England I might have felt, as I have always done, that though time has caused me to change my mind upon many points, it has effected no alteration in my heart; but standing there on the heights of the Djurgård, with that marvellous prospect of rocks and woods, hills and islands, churches and palaces, and glittering expanse of lake and sea which make up the fair city of Stockholm spread out around and beneath me—standing there in the old place and looking down upon the old scene—upon the great flat-roofed palace and the perforated spire of the Riddarholms Kyrka and the Regerings-gatan, where she lived, and away yonder the cemetery where they laid her to rest so long ago now, I couldn't but acknowledge that something had passed away from me with the lapse of years, and that I was no longer quite the same man who had stood on that self-same spot one summer afternoon in the year 1854, despair in his soul and the shadow of a life-long sorrow turning all beauty and sunshine into darkness for him.

I suppose it must needs be so always. If pain and sorrow were to lose nothing of their first acuteness the business of the world would hardly get itself transacted; and a man who should allow his faculties and energies to be paralysed for ever by one blow, however severe, would be a poor sort of creature after all. Still, leaning over the parapet there, and watching the sun set behind the wooded islands of the Mälar lake, it gave me a great pang of regret—almost of remorse—to think how different my life has been from what I imagined it was going to be a

Digitized by Google

quarter of a century ago. All sorts of memories came back to me. I recollected dining with her once in the Djurgård, at the Hasselbacken restaurant, and walking in the woods with her afterwards, and all that she said. I recollected our rides to Ulriksdal and Drottningholm, and our skating-parties on the lake, and our little quarrels and reconciliations, and who knows what other trivialities, which I will not set down here. I recollected, in short, that I had forgotten a great deal; and therein, I suppose, lay the sting.

The dear old city is just the same. Hasselbacken is there yet: I could hear, from where I stood, the rattle of the knives and forks and the chatter and laughter of the people at the little round tables; and presently the band began to play, just as of old. Mute voices of a hundred familiar objects seemed to be whispering, "We are unchanged; but you—have you kept your vow? Have you been true to the past through all that has come and gone?"

I hardly know why I couldn't answer "Yes" at once. Judged by ordinary standards, I have not much to reproach myself with; indeed many people would call me a miracle of constancy. I have never married, nor thought of marrying; in one sense I have never forgotten; only in another and a deeper one, I am afraid I have—a little. Or at least so it seemed to me yesterday afternoon. What has my life been? Perhaps one might say a useful one, in my own rather limited sphere. I can't accuse myself of having been very happy; but then I am quite sure that no one has ever suspected me of being the reverse. The truth is that, when I shave myself in the mornings, my glass reflects the face of a hale, hearty, middle-aged man with the prospect of many years of health before him; a prosperous, contented sort of face; the typical face of a well-to-do landed proprietor, who represents his county in the Conservative interest, hob-nobs with his brother magistrates, and knows a good deal about high farming and fat beasts and foxes and pheasants and such things. My face, in point of fact, images myself with about as much accuracy as faces generally do image their owners. I am a little out of conceit with it this evening. It may be very absurd, but it is nevertheless the fact, that I should be far better pleased with myself if I were haggard and hollow-cheeked and wore an air of utter indifference to all the good things of this world. My fine physique strikes me as unpardonably vulgar, and my rude health as a kind of treachery. It is true that I hadn't much appetite for dinner to-night; but in general I eat a good deal. I am a big, strong man, and I can't help it.

And now, pondering over many things with a very sad heart, it has occurred to me that there might be some relief in writing down the history of those brief winter and summer months which, when all is said and done, were the best and happiest of my life—which were *all* my life, as I sometimes think—certainly all of it that I care to look back upon. How well I remember that bright autumn morning of the year 1854, when I got my first sight of Stockholm! I can see myself stepping

Digitized by Google

out upon the quay, as tall and handsome a young fellow as you could wish to meet—at the age of fifty-one my grey hairs and wrinkles surely entitle me to say so—with all the world before him, a sufficiency of money in his pocket, and a boundless capacity for amusement and wonder. Those were stirring times. Our fleet was cruising about in the Baltic; we had just knocked the Russians' fortress of Bomarsund about their ears; and people were beginning to talk of the restoration of Finland to its rightful owners, and to wonder how long Sweden was going to remain a passive spectator of the misdeeds of her ancient enemy. There was a good deal of tall talk, I recollect. Russia was to lose the Crimea, to be driven back behind the lakes of Vigo and Onega—obviously her natural frontier; Poland was to be liberated.

Well, I daresay our good friends the Swedes were ready enough to receive a young Englishman with open arms. I don't know whether they wouldn't have welcomed even a Russian; for, in truth, there could be nowhere in the world a more hospitable, warm-hearted, open-handed, pleasure-loving race than that which inhabited the capital of King Oscar I.; and I believe it was not so much because I was an Englishman as because I was a stranger and alone that I had hardly time to deliver my few letters of introduction before I was almost overwhelmed with kindness. The winter season was beginning; the Court had returned to the town; and entertainments of every sort and description were on foot. I took my share in all of them, nothing loth; I made my bow to the King, a tall, soldierly gentleman, with a grey moustache twirled upwards; I was made to feel myself perfectly at home in a trice. They say the French are the best-bred people in Europe, and perhaps it is true that they have the finest manners; but I think I could name one or two incidents of good breeding in which the Swedes have the advantage of them. There is an innate friendliness, a natural ease about these blue-eyed, fair-haired people which springs directly from their good hearts, and could indeed spring from no other source, I imagine.

My chief companion, guide, and introducer at that time was one Nordström, a young man of about my own age, of good family, comfortably off, though not rich, a keen sportsman, a bit of a lady-killer, and a popular fellow in society. He knew everybody and went everywhere. It was Nordström who taught me how to dance on skates; it was Nordström who arranged my appearance at Court; it was he who obtained the greater part of my invitations for me; and it was he who presented me to the Countess Adelcrantz.

"You must know the Countess," Nordström said to me, one day. "Oh, yes, you cannot be said to have seen our society until you have passed through her *salons*. She is a young widow, beautiful as the morning, and wealthy as—as—oh, more wealthy than one can imagine. She has estates——" Here my friend drew in his breath, and described an enormous circle with his arms by way of conveying some faint idea of the lady's territorial grandeur. "They say she can drive a matter of

Digitized by Google

two hundred miles and use none but her own post-horses. You will understand that it is not everybody who is admitted into her house; but come only with me, and I will promise you a good reception."

I have hinted that my excellent friend Nordström owned no little influence with the ladies of his native city. He took a very innocent pride in this power of his, and was wont to boast that there was not a single house of any importance in Stockholm into which he did not possess a standing right of entry. Ladies, I have observed, very soon discover what are the objects and feelings of the men who affect their society, and know which of them they may admit to terms of friendly intimacy without fear of being misunderstood. The *belles dames* of Stockholm had, I presume, taken Nordström's measure without any difficulty, and at the time when I made his acquaintance they seemed to have agreed to treat him as a spoilt child. He made love to them all under the very noses of their husbands, without, so far as I ever heard, anything but good-humoured laughter coming of it; he called most of them by their Christian names, upon some pretexted fiction of cousinship, and he was good enough to entertain me with many anecdotes of their several dispositions, caprices, and *exigeances*—which last, he used to declare, were a sore trouble to him. But when he mentioned the Countess Adelcrantz it was in a perceptibly altered tone. He spoke of her with an admiration amounting to enthusiasm, but in no wise approaching familiarity. He made no pretence of being among her intimates; but stated, with modest exultation, that she had been very gracious to him, and had already permitted him to bring one or two friends to her evening receptions. And indeed, when I met her, I fully understood Nordström's mental attitude towards this marvellous Countess, and, for my own part, could only acquiesce in its fitness.

As I sit here in my bedroom at Rydberg's Hotel, I stop scribbling for a moment, I close my eyes, and a picture rises up clearly before me from out of the mists of those dead-and-gone times. I see a spacious room, lighted by multitudes of wax candles in glittering crystal chandeliers; I see a profusion of exotics piled up in the embrasures of the windows; I see groups of ladies in full toilette standing on the polished *parquet*—a blaze of diamonds, a mass of many-coloured uniforms. And, oh, what uniforms they were, some of them! What gorgeous combinations of dark and light blue and yellow and silver and gold! What resplendent hussars! what fearful and wonderful dragoons and lancers! There was one regiment, I remember—its special designation has escaped me—the apparel of whose officers used to fill me with delight and amazement. Their blue garments were made to fit them literally like skins, and, instead of being ornamented with the customary gold lace, were covered with constellations of little gilt buttons. How these gentlemen got into their clothes, and how, having got into them, they contrived to mount their horses, is more than I can imagine; but their general appearance was very pleasing indeed, and never palled upon me. I used to

Digitized by Google

wonder sometimes what Charles XII. in his threadbare coat and rusty hat would have said to them. Well, I can see all this, and a great deal more; and in the doorway is standing a tall and graceful lady, with the whitest skin, the most golden hair, the bluest eyes, and the longest eyelashes that ever were seen. The folding-doors have just been flung open by a couple of footmen in oddly-cut, rather gaudy liveries, and two young fellows are making their entrance—one of them a little dazed and bewildered by all this magnificence.

I don't know that I can give any more exact description of the Countess Adelcrantz than is contained in the few words which I have just set down. She was supremely beautiful—everyone, I think, agreed as to that—but of course she was something more than beautiful; else I should hardly be writing about her now after all these years. And there is the difficulty. I couldn't convey any idea of the charm of her manner and speech if I were to take pages over it. It was something peculiar to herself—something at once sympathetic and soothing and faintly intoxicating. It is not to be described; but those who have been under her spell—and there must be many such still living—know what I mean. She must at this time have been in her twenty-fifth year; but then and for long afterwards she gave me the idea of being—I won't say—more than her age; but certainly much older than myself. As a matter of fact, she was by one year my junior; but then I was remarkably youthful both outwardly and inwardly—a mere hobbledehoy in comparison with one of her knowledge and varied experiences; and if the truth must be confessed, it was as a mere hobbledehoy and nothing more that she appeared to regard me. She addressed a few words to me, smilingly, but certainly rather condescendingly, when Nordström pronounced my name, and then turned to speak to one of the cavaliers who were stationed around her like a small bevy of court officials round their queen. It was her custom to receive her guests in this quasi-royal fashion; a custom which in anyone else might have struck one as a trifle ridiculous, but which in her seemed only natural and proper.

I fell back, and leant against the wall, watching her, while other arrivals defiled before her and passed on through the rooms, most of them making their way towards a smaller *salon* at the end of the suite, where a sort of impromptu dance had been set on foot. A cat may look at a king, and why should not I look at this beautiful lady, who was unquestionably worth a little study? To describe feminine costume is beyond the range of my powers; but I know that she wore a silk dress of the palest pink hue, that her ornaments were pearls, and that her hair was arranged in a mass of tiny clustering curls, which in those days was a somewhat unusual style of *coiffure*. She talked with a good deal of animation, I noticed, now to one, now to another of her attendant squires; but it was obvious to me that in her estimation they were but so many lay-figures, and that she addressed the one who might happen to be nearest to her elbow, scarcely troubling herself to look at him before she spoke. To be

Digitized by Google

sure, none of them was worthy of any special mark of her favour. I scrutinised them quietly, and found them to be young men of the conventional Swedish type, handsome, blonde, broad-shouldered, and resembling one another like a flock of sheep. Only one among their number excited my curiosity; and he remained motionless in the background, never once opening his lips, and making no attempt to attract the Countess's attention, though his deep-set grey eyes kept an unceasing watch upon her. He was a decidedly remarkable person—remarkable in the midst of that flaxen-headed company on account of his black hair and dark complexion—still more remarkable by reason of his taciturnity and the grave, saturnine cast of his sharply-cut features. He interested me, and I fell to speculating about him, wondering who he was, and what it might be that he was watching for with that steady intent gaze, and why his neighbours seemed rather to avoid him. It was not a bad face, I concluded; only a very sad and stern one, with a touch of bitterness in its expression, such as a man might wear who had met with some great disappointment. I was still busy in forming conjectures with regard to him when there was a sudden breaking-up of the group by the doorway. The Countess had forsaken her station, and was moving slowly towards the improvised dancing-room, with her troop of satellites behind her.

My melancholy gentleman lingered for a few seconds, as if hesitating whether to follow the crowd or not. Then, much to my surprise, he took two strides in my direction, and accosted me, without preface of any kind.

"Well, you have been a very long time standing there," he said, speaking in English with a strong accent. "You have already a great admiration for her; is it not so?"

"I think the Countess is the most beautiful woman I ever saw in my life," I answered, with all the superlative heartiness of youth.

He did not laugh. On the contrary, he frowned at me almost angrily. "That is to say a very great deal," he remarked.

"It's true though," I returned simply.

"How can it be true? There are a thousand—ten thousand women in the world as beautiful as she! No; it is not beauty that can hold a man so for half an hour—mouth open, eyes staring. No; what you say is great nonsense."

This outburst seemed to have the effect of recalling him to himself; for he broke off abruptly, and presently, with a slight shrug of his shoulders, "Pooh! you are a boy—you are only a boy," said he, and marched off without another word.

After this I felt a sensible diminution of interest in my new acquaintance. What had I done to be spoken to in that rude way? And what did he mean by calling me a boy? I have already said that I was young for my age, and I was quite conscious of being so at the time; but that did not make it the more pleasant to have one's attention so pointedly called to the circumstance. And here I may as well admit that the

Digitized by Google

Countess's manner of receiving me had wounded my vanity ever so slightly. My good-natured Stockholm friends had hitherto made something of a lion of me in a small way. They had accustomed me to look for little attentions, to which, of course, I was in no way entitled, save in my quality of an Englishman and a traveller; and this was the first occasion upon which I had been made to feel that my presence was really a matter of no importance to anybody. Now I am not, nor ever have been, a shy man; yet I confess that when I look back upon some of the audacious proceedings of my early life, I do not know whether to be most amused or ashamed. "Nothing venture, nothing have!" thought I to myself, and I walked off towards the sound of the music with a firm resolution to get speech of my lovely hostess.

I found her standing as before, with her little court about her, looking on at the whirling dancers. I waited my opportunity, and presently, taking advantage of a moment when she happened to be conversing with nobody, advanced, and said in my best French, "Will Madame la Comtesse deign to honour me with a waltz?"

She turned her blue eyes upon me with a momentary look of uncontrollable surprise, and then for one second I thought she was going to burst out laughing; but she was always courteous and kindly to all alike—I never knew her to be otherwise.

"I do not usually dance in my own house," she answered, in a very soft, gentle voice; "but if it will give you pleasure, I shall be happy to break through my rule for once."

Immediately afterwards we were revolving among the other couples, she and I. I danced, I believe, in such a manner as might be expected of a six-foot-three and eleven-stone-ten Englishman. I am afraid there never was much of the poetry of motion about my big body; but at least I did not lose step, or bump my partner, and being perfectly sound, wind and limb, nothing but the cessation of the music would have stopped me, once I was started, if the Countess herself had not at last shown signs of exhaustion.

"That will do," she said, disengaging herself, and leaning back against the wall with a somewhat increased colour and quickened breath. Then she looked at me, and this time laughed outright.

It was the most delightful, childish-sounding laughter I had ever listened to—quite low, but perfectly unaffected and irrepressible—the very embodiment of mirth. I did not know what she was laughing at, but there was something contagious in her merriment; so I began to laugh too, which made her worse. She offered me no explanation of her behaviour; but as soon as she had recovered herself, began to ask me a series of rapid questions. What had brought me to Sweden? Was I travelling only for my amusement? Were my parents still living? Had I brothers or sisters?

I was not a little flattered by the interest which she displayed in my plans and belongings, and by the unmistakable friendliness of her tone.

Digitized by Google

I gave her the fullest information, I remember, as to the subjects about which she inquired, relating how my long minority had placed me in possession of a larger sum of ready money than the improvement of my modest estate demanded, and how I was determined to see the world before settling down as a country squire. She heard me with a little quasi-maternal, benevolent air, approving my designs, and offering me a few sage counsels, which perhaps might have fallen more appropriately from the lips of a woman twice her age.

"Enjoy your liberty; make the most of it; it will not last. See everything; admire everything while you have the power: that will not last either. Nothing lasts long in this world—not even sorrow—

Le temps emporte sur son aile
Et le printemps et l'hirondelle,
Et la vie et les jours perdus;
Tout s'en va comme la fumée,
L'espérance et la renommée——"

She did not end the quotation. I fill up the blank now, sadly enough—

Et moi qui vous ai tant aimée,
Et toi qui ne t'en souviens plus!

To which of us do the words apply? Oh, surely not to me! No! If I said just now that I had forgotten, it was not true. I have not changed. Only I have grown old, and in the business and bustle of life I have learnt to live without her—which is what I thought at one time that I could never do. And she—do they remember where she is? Is their bliss clouded by memories of earthly sorrow? Or is she at rest and asleep, and shall we both wake and join hands when the last day comes? My rector tells me that I am not orthodox in my views of a future state; but I cannot believe in any happiness away from those whom we have loved here. My whole nature would have to be changed before I could be happy without her love; and if I am not to be myself any more, I would rather cease altogether.

But I am wandering too far from the Regerings-gatan, and my first conversation with the Countess Adelcrantz, in which no topics save such as related to this present world were treated of. We must have remained in the same spot where we had stopped dancing for some ten minutes, at the end of which time the short and simple annals of my life can have contained no further secrets for the Countess. I suppose it amused and pleased her to listen to my boyish talk.

Meanwhile it was impossible not to notice that we were the cynosure of all eyes. If my presence had been somewhat overlooked earlier in the evening, I had no cause to complain of not being sufficiently stared at now. The waltz had come to an end; the crowd in the room had increased; and I could not help observing the interrogatory glances that were directed at me from all quarters, the comments that were interchanged, and the evident general wonder who could be the young

Digitized by Google

stranger whom the fastidious Countess honoured with so large a share of her attention. I caught sight of Nordström, among the rest, with a most comical expression upon his countenance, indicative, as I read it, of mingled pride in his protégé and amazement at my assurance; and from the far background, my strange, dark-complexioned acquaintance was watching us with piercing grey eyes, under a lowering brow. I won't deny that I was a trifle elated by all this. I quite understood that I had only my own obscurity and the Countess's good nature to thank for the conspicuous marks of favour shown to me; but I was young enough to rather enjoy the sensation of making half a hundred people jealous at the same moment, and I believe that I actually had it in my mind to ask my companion for another dance, when all of a sudden I found that I was being graciously dismissed. Having doubtless had enough of me, she gave me my *congé* quite naturally, just as any royalty might have done; and although she did not take leave of me in so many words, she gave me clearly to understand that I was not expected to approach her again that evening.

"I receive every Tuesday and Thursday," she said. "Sometimes we dance, as you see; sometimes we have music or theatricals. Come whenever you are disposed, and have no better employment for your evening. Or, if you like to call upon me any afternoon, without ceremony, pray do so. I shall always be happy to see you."

And so, with a smile, and something between a bow and a nod, she turned away. I need hardly say that I now felt no temptation to linger in the dancing room. I had a few acquaintances among the assembled guests, and Nordström, who presently joined me, offered to introduce me to some new partners; but, after dancing with the divine Countess, I preferred going home to dropping to any lower social level, and without much difficulty I persuaded my friend to accompany me.

He treated me to a good deal of good-humoured raillery as we walked briskly away through the frosty night air. So nothing less than the most beautiful and the wealthiest lady in Sweden would do for me, eh? All my pretended modesty was but a cloak for exclusiveness, it appeared.

"Communicate to me the secret of your successes, you lucky fellow; I think you owe it to me to do as much as that."

I gravely told him the truth. I had been presented to a lady; I had asked for the honour of a dance with her—why not? If I had been thought worthy to enter her house, did it not follow that I was worthy to speak to her?

He seemed much struck with this conclusive reasoning. "Yes," he said musingly, "you are right—certainly, you are quite right. With women all is gained by audacity. You have more knowledge of the fair sex than I gave you credit for, my friend." And I am sure that his respect for me increased greatly from that hour.

Before we parted I took occasion to ask him whether he knew anything

Digitized by Google

of the mysterious individual whose eyes followed the Countess so persistently.

"Know him? To be sure I know him. That is Count Sten Adelcrantz, a cousin of our beautiful hostess's, or rather of her late husband's. He is a part of her establishment; he goes with her everywhere. People say——"

"What do people say?" I inquired, after waiting in vain for Nordström to fill up the hiatus.

"Oh, there are ill-natured people all over the world, you know. One hears their gossip, but one need not repeat it. Who can escape from slanderous tongues? I myself have had to suffer from them sometimes; but I have never allowed them to disturb my peace; nor, you may be sure, has the Countess. Poor Count Sten! there is no need to be a wizard to see that he is crazily in love with her; but what I say is, a favoured lover does not carry about such a dismal face. Eh? am I not right? For the matter of that, he is not the only one. The truth is, we are all in love with her."

I fear that this innocent speech caused me for the first time to mentally qualify poor Nordström as a coxcomb; while if it served in some degree to explain Count Sten's incivility to me, it did not assuredly increase my liking for him.

II.

When I look back upon that merry winter at Stockholm—upon the fiddling and dancing and sleighing, the gala-nights at the opera, the masked balls, the torch-light skating-parties, the prodigious dinners, beginning at three o'clock in the afternoon and ending I am afraid to say at what hour—when I look back upon these, and the other manifold diversions which lent wings to time, it seems to me that the Countess took part in them all. Perhaps I have forgotten the days which I spent apart from her; but indeed I don't think there were many such. And again, I should be puzzled to say how long a period of time elapsed, or through how many stages of progressive intimacy I had to pass, before I became her constant companion—before I learnt to love her with a devotion which has remained unaltered and undiminished throughout my life.

I would not have it supposed that she suspected the existence of my passion, or that I myself had the smallest expectation of touching an answering chord in her breast. My love for her resembled the adoration of one of those pages for his queen whose sighs have furnished the *motif* of many a mediæval ballad. The prize, you see, was too far beyond my reach; the fruit hung too high for me to cherish any dreams of plucking it. Her presence sufficed. It was enough for me to be permitted to be near her, to listen to her, to touch her hand at meeting and parting, to breathe the faint perfume that floated around her. And as for her, she was too much accustomed to homage to attach any great importance to

Digitized by Google

the acquisition of a fresh slave. Yet she certainly allowed me more privileges than were accorded to her own countrymen. She told me frankly that I pleased her; she always made me welcome; sometimes—and those were my best days—she would permit me to be her sole escort on one of those errands of charity which had made her name a household word among the poor folk, or would insist upon taking me to admire some of the lions of Stockholm; for, as she said, I was in danger of forgetting that there were other things to be seen in Sweden besides the inhabitants of the capital.

No one thought of questioning her right to roam the streets with a single attendant cavalier. Conventionality in such matters is not, that I am aware of, less strict in Stockholm than elsewhere; but of one thing I am certain, that if there were a Countess Adelcrantz in London, she might enjoy an equal immunity from criticism. There are some women so proud and pure that it is a waste of time to fling dirt at them. Those who try to do so only soil their own fingers, and can never hit their mark.

One day in particular stands out in my recollection from a host of others, as being the first on which she admitted me a step or two into her confidence, and raised me, as it were, for the time being, to something like a footing of equality with herself. We were in that part of the National Museum known as the Klädskammar (clothes-room), whither she had taken me to inspect sundry relics of Sweden's departed kings and queens, which have been carefully preserved by their subjects and handed down from generation to generation. It made my heart ache to revisit this singular collection yesterday, and to see again Gustaf-Adolf's buff coat and lace collar, the blood-stained shirt which was sent home from Lützen, Charles XII.'s long blue coat and jack-boots, and poor Gustaf III.'s domino, with Ankarström's bullet-hole through it. So many of her words came back to me. The room seemed to be full of echoes of that soft voice, so long silent.

I confess that I didn't know much about the Vasas in those days. I had been educated at Eton and Oxford, and modern history was not my strong point. But the Countess, who was not only well-read, but had an enthusiastic love for the gallant race which had made her country great, related their several achievements to me as we passed their old clothes in review, and elicited from me a willing tribute of admiration. Of course she had a great deal to say, and many anecdotes not to be found in the history-books to relate of the great Gustavus, of the tenth and twelfth Charleses, and of other heroes, less world-renowned but scarcely less beloved; but, oddly enough, her chief sympathy seemed to be reserved for Queen Christina. Now of that sovereign I did happen to have read something; and what I knew of her by no means redounded to her credit. Was it not she who roamed scandalously about the world clad in male attire, who abjured the faith for which her father had died, who cursed and swore like a trooper, and whose private life was of the

Digitized by Google

most equivocal kind? And hadn't I seen in the gallery at Fontainebleau the stains of murdered Monaldeschi's blood? I ventured to enumerate some of the eccentricities of this royal termagant, and to express my surprise that anything in her character should have recommended itself to the Countess Adelcrantz's affection.

"Ah," she said, "you judge Queen Christina as foreigners do. We in Sweden have forgotten and forgiven her sins, which were rather against herself than against others, and remember only her great and generous heart, and her learning and wisdom, and the true love which she had for her country. You remember what old Oxenstjern said of her on his death-bed: 'Whatever may have been her faults, she will always be to me Gustaf's daughter.' That feeling remains with many of us yet. As for me, I have always admired her for her strength and ndependence. She dared to be herself and to live her own life; no one ever managed to coerce her. She would not marry her cousin to please either him or the States; but of her own free will she handed him over her crown and her kingdom, and sailed away to the south and liberty. Don't you think she was right? Is it not a thousand times better to be free than to be the most powerful sovereign in the world and wear fetters? Oh, there can be nothing to compare with freedom—perfect, absolute freedom! I wonder what it would be like?"

The Countess had seated herself beside a window, and was looking beyond the snow-covered streets and buildings and the frozen sea towards the horizon, with such a sad longing and almost despair in her beautiful eyes that my heart ached for her, and I exclaimed involuntarily —perhaps a little indiscreetly:—

"But surely, Countess, you are free, if ever anyone was!"

She did not answer me for a moment; her thoughts seemed to be far away. But presently she turned to me with her customary bright smile.

"I? Oh, I have my chains and fetters, like everybody else. You will have yours too, one day or another. Most people forge them for themselves, and have not much right to complain of being galled by them afterwards; but some have to wear the chains made by others for others; and that seems a little hard."

I could not doubt that she was alluding to herself. "I wish I knew what your chains were, that I might break them!" I cried.

"What, would you rob me of my estates?" she asked, laughing. "Would you have me abdicate, like Queen Christina, and wander away to foreign countries in search of adventures?"

"If it would make you happier to do so—yes," I answered unhesitatingly. I had a magnificent contempt for money and acres in those days.

"Well, but I am not a queen," she said, sighing; "nor am I a Christina either. I must bear my burden. And even if I could start on my travels, and see Rome and Naples and Athens, as I have some-

Digitized by Google

times dreamt of doing, where should I find a companion? Shall I tell you something that will surprise you? It is that I have no friends in the world—not one. Ah, I understand your look of incredulity. You think me exaggerative—possibly a little ungrateful. You are thinking that you have seen my friends gathered round me in hundreds. But in reality all these people are strangers to me; they don't know me, nor do I know them. They are fond of amusement and society, and so am I; and therefore we come together. But I should look in vain for a friend among them."

It was no more than natural that I should eagerly assure the Countess of the entire and eternal devotion of one, at least, among those who habitually frequented her society, and that, although I might not be worthy to aspire to the title of her friend, yet she might rely upon it that in an emergency no friend would serve her with more joy and pride than I. I daresay I got very red in the face, and stammered out my protestation clumsily enough; for the British tongue does not readily accommodate itself to the utterance of fine phrases; but I don't think she minded these ingenuous signs of confusion, and when I paused, she thanked me with a quiet grace that was all her own. She said many kind things; amongst others, that I was not to speak or think of her any more as though she were some superior kind of being to myself, and that she hoped our friendship would last long after I had left Stockholm and had entered upon the serious business of life in my own country. "In the meantime," she added, getting up with a laugh, "I must go home and prepare to receive twenty people at dinner. Already I hear the clanking of my chains."

But I doubted whether the chains to which she had referred were of that easy social kind. As I made my way towards the rooms which I had hired in the Gustaf-Adolf's Torg, musing as I went over all that had passed, I felt convinced that the Countess had a secret trouble, and, moreover, that Count Sten was in some way connected with it. That whimsical personage continued to be an enigma to me. I could not make out in what light he regarded the Countess, or was regarded by her. Her demeanour towards him was rather peculiar. She was always gentle with him; and I had observed that she studied his comfort and wishes in many small ways; but then she always seemed to breathe more freely in his absence, and when she looked at him there was something in her eyes which I could not fathom. Was it aversion? Sometimes I had fancied that it was fear; and indeed it might well be that; for Sten's behaviour had more than once led me to question his sanity. That he was enamoured of the Countess, and that he had been refused by her, I felt tolerably certain; but his reason for haunting her after the extinction of his hopes was not so clear. Nor was his manner by any means invariably that of a lover. It was a strange mixture of deference and defiance. Sometimes he would seem to abase himself before her in a sort of despair, and to take a delight in running her errands

Digitized by Google

with a needless ostentation which was evidently distressing to her; but there were other times—especially after one of her many admirers had been in the house—when he would address her in a tone of sharp authority which made me long to break my stick over his back. How he hated those handsome young suitors! Their name was legion; but I don't think he saw any safety in their number; and if they had not been the most forbearing of men, I believe he would have had a duel to fight every morning. I am free to confess that I did not greatly love them myself. I had no belief in their success; but I was jealous of them for all that; and it was not the less painful to me to look on at the wooing of others because I cherished no illusions as to my own chances.

It was perhaps a community of hopelessness that created some sort of bond between Count Sten and me. However that may be, it is certain that he became reconciled to my frequent visits after the first few days, and he even went out of his way, upon several occasions, to show me some civility. He had satisfied himself, I take it, that there was nothing to be feared from me; or, at least, almost satisfied himself; for every now and again—if, for instance, he chanced to encounter me returning with the Countess from one of our long rambles—he would attack me with a certain sarcastic savagery, trying his utmost to wound my feelings and make me lose my temper with him; an attempt in which, thanks to my phlegmatic British temperament, he never succeeded. "But you are a boy—you are only a boy!" he would generally conclude, using the same words which had so affronted me on the occasion of our first meeting. I don't know whether it was to convince me of the absurdity of my supposed pretensions, or to still some uneasiness of his own, that he reiterated this phrase so often; but it usually had the effect of restoring him to equanimity.

At such times as Count Sten was not in one of his black moods, he was pleasant company enough. He had read a great deal; he had got together a valuable library on the second floor of his cousin's house, which was given up to his use; he could converse well upon a wide range of subjects. But his favourite study was genealogy. Upon this topic he would descant as long as you would listen to him; he had the pedigree of every noble family in Europe at his fingers' ends; and to hear him talk, you would have fancied that the house of Adelcrantz was at the head of them all. Indeed I have very little doubt that such was his honest conviction. His pride of birth amounted to a mania. I believe he thought that there was no crowned head in the world but would be honoured by his notice. The Vasas themselves were but men of yesterday in comparison with his family; and as for the reigning dynasty, he alluded to it with the most superb contempt, and could never be persuaded to make his bow at Court. It was his duty to respect his country's choice: but an Adelcrantz do homage to a Bernadotte! No, indeed! He often showed me his family tree, which lost itself in I forget what fabulous mists of antiquity, and was wont to

Digitized by Google

boast that it recorded no single instance of a misalliance. His own mother, he told me, was an Italian marchesina: hence his darkness of complexion.

I can see him now pacing up and down that long upper room, a tall picturesque figure in his black velvet coat and high boots. I used to smoke my pipe while he entertained me, by the hour together, with the sayings and doings of some departed Adelcrantz; but if I tentatively led the conversation up to modern times, and tried to elicit some information as to the lady who now ruled over the estates of Count Sten's ancestors, his communicativeness would abruptly cease, and as often as not he would stride to the door, hold it open, and send me about my business without any apology whatever.

III.

It was in the month of February, I think, after the end of the Carnival season, that the Countess determined to spend a week in her Dalecarlian domains, and invited a number of her friends to accompany her thither. The invitation was readily accepted on all sides; for there was little doing in Stockholm now that dancing had been put a stop to for a few weeks; and, as Nordström, who, to his great joy, had been included among the bidden guests, remarked, it was not every day that one got the chance of combining sport with society and royal fare. For my part, I was enchanted with the prospect of a change from town life, and of seeing something of Swedish scenery in winter.

We left the city with the first grey light of a frosty morning, and were soon well on our way—a large and merry party of us—waking the echoes far and wide with loud voices and laughter and the ringing of sledge-bells, as we sped swiftly over the snow. The warmest and costliest of furs protected us against the cold; relays of post-horses were waiting for us at every stage, where also sundry hot drinks were in readiness for those who were inclined that way. Everything had been thought of; everything went smoothly; it was the perfection of winter travelling. And by good luck the weather proved still; so that one could enjoy the charm of that solemn white landscape without fear of frost-bites.

To me it was all novel and delightful. The keen air; the pale sunlight upon the distant hills; the pine trees weighed down by their load of snow; the bare branches and twigs seen through a casing of the clearest crystal; the long line of sledges, with their galloping horses and trailing furs—all these things so filled me with exhilaration that, if I had not been an Englishman and habituated to self-control, I must have shouted and sung like Nordström, who was letting off his superfluous spirits by means of a succession of discordant *jodels*, varied by snatches of peasant ditties, which, to judge by the laughter they provoked, must have been of a most facetious order. We slept that night at Sala, and on the next day entered the wilder and more mountainous

Digitized by Google

district for which we were bound. There was much talk of wolves as we approached the Dalecarlian forests—those marauders having been reported to have lately increased in numbers to an alarming extent—but we saw nothing of them, and I don't think any of us felt their absence as much of a deprivation. We didn't care about wolves; what we wanted was to get a shot at a bear; and we had been promised that a bear-hunt should be organised for us, although the season was not very favourable to our chances of success.

The Countess's castle—or rather country-house; for the great rambling building had little pretension to a more ambitious title—stood on a hillside in the neighbourhood of Rättvik, looking down upon the great Siljan Sjö. It was a fine situation, and they told me that the country all round was lovely in summer-time; but I can't fancy any improvement on those wild scenes as I saw them, sheeted in snow, fantastic with wreathed drifts and hanging icicles; a sparkling fairy-land by day, but more enchanting still by night, when the moon shone down upon the frozen lake, and all heights and depths seemed doubled. Almost every evening we marched down to the lake in a long procession, the servants bearing flaming torches, and danced skating quadrilles to the inspiriting strains of some musicians who had been brought from Stockholm for that purpose. The peasants—stalwart giants in knee-breeches and white stockings and short-waisted blue coats with skirts reaching more than half-way down the leg—used to assemble at a respectful distance and watch us. The Countess never failed to take an opportunity of speaking to them. She knew them all by name, and remembered their troubles and ailments and family affairs without any need of prompting. They were a sturdy, independent race, not caring much for strangers nor desirous of being studied by them; but they were ready to do anything for their beautiful lady; and it was to please her that some of them consented to come up to the castle, one evening, and favour us with a sight of their national dances and a hearing of their national songs.

That is one among the many pictures which hang in the gallery of my memory. The long narrow hall, cleared of its furniture, decorated with reindeer and elk antlers, and lighted by sconces and by a great brass chandelier of antique form; the Countess and her guests gathered, some sitting, some standing, at the upper end of the room; the country people, in their quaint costumes, separated from them by a wide intervening space, and the grey-haired major-domo, a fussy and important personage, coming and going between the two groups—it might be yesterday, instead of a quarter of a century ago, that I saw it all. The peasants were a little shy and defiant at first—I fancy they did not much relish the notion of being made an exhibition of—but the bashfulness of rustics is less obstinate than that of town-folk, and they soon warmed to their work. I daresay a constant and liberal supply of refreshments contributed not a little towards setting them at their ease. Their singing was really excellent, and some of their melodies exceedingly plaintive

Digitized by Google

and sweet, while as for their dancing, it made up in vigour and agility what it lacked in grace. One of their number, a strapping young yellow-bearded fellow, elicited great applause from the audience by an improvised ballad of inordinate length, which my knowledge of Swedish did not enable me to follow, but which, as I was given to understand, included a spirited eulogy of the Countess, together with a sly hit or two at certain peculiarities in the dress and persons of her friends which had tickled the native sense of humour. And so everything passed off well, and the evening might have been counted a thoroughly successful one, but for an untoward incident which marred its conclusion.

We had all moved down to the lower end of the hall, to thank our entertainers and wish them good-night, when the yellow-bearded improvisatore, flushed by his previous success, and also, I am afraid, by his too frequent attentions to the neighbouring tankard, must needs take it into his head to step forward and make a speech. He said it had done all their hearts good to see the Countess amongst them once more, looking so well, and more beautiful than ever. She could not come too often, nor stay too long; and for his part, he wished there were no such things as great cities in the world, so that every noble might live in his own home and among his own people, and breathe the pure country air, and follow the field-sports of his fathers—which surely must be a more happy and wholesome lot than to dwell in a crowded street, with your neighbours on either side driving your elbows into your ribs, so to speak. But, continued this amiable numskull, it was easy to understand that the solitude of the long winter might frighten a lady away from their lakes and mountains. There must be a master as well as a mistress in the house before all could go well, and the good old times come back again. Now, God be praised! there was no lack of handsome and noble gentlemen in Sweden: he saw before him as goodly a company as the eyes of man could wish to rest upon. Let the Countess make her choice, and it would be a good day for all of them when they were bidden to dance at her wedding.

The peroration was not a happy one; but obviously the only thing to be done was to ignore it, and to get rid of the too fluent speaker and his companions as quickly as might be. Such, no doubt, was the opinion of the Countess, who was not easily put out of countenance; but unfortunately there was another person present who did not take so lenient a view of the offender's conduct. Hardly were the words spoken before Count Sten strode forward, his face livid and his eyes blazing.

"You hound!" he shouted, gripping the man by the shoulder, and shaking him violently. He seemed to be beside himself with passion, and to have lost all control over his actions.

"Sten! Sten!" cried the Countess, in a low, pleading voice; but he never heeded her. He was choking with rage; his voice had sunk to a hoarse whisper.

"Hans Lund, you are dismissed. A year's rent shall be paid to you

Digitized by Google

to-morrow. Go! Take yourselves away out of the country, you and yours, and never let your faces be seen here again, or it shall be the worse for you."

The man shook off his assailant with one jerk of his broad shoulders, and stared him in the face contemptuously. "The worse for me! It shall be the worse for you if you dare to lay hands upon me again, though you are a noble, and I only a poor farmer. After all, you are not what you seem, perhaps; for who ever heard of a black Adelcrantz? But Adelcrantz or no Adelcrantz, you can't harm me; I take no dismissal except from my gracious lady. Madam, are my wife and children to be turned out of doors to please this gentleman?"

"No, no," answered the Countess, hurriedly; "it is all a misunderstanding."

"The man shall go!" thundered Count Sten.

"He must not go," returned the Countess. She was as pale as Sten himself, and there was a tremor in her voice; but she spoke clearly enough. "I am mistress here," she said.

All of a sudden a total change came over Sten's countenance and attitude. His anger was gone; his head sank on his breast; his clenched fingers relaxed. "Yes," he murmured in a tone of intense bitterness; "you are mistress. It is yours to command, and mine to obey. Is it your will that I shall ask pardon of this dog?"

The Countess made no audible reply; but I was standing close behind her, and I heard her whisper, "How can you be so cruel? Don't humiliate me before them all!"

Sten neither raised his eyes from the ground nor spoke; but turned on his heel and walked away, his footsteps echoing through the silence. Presently the heavy door closed with a crash, and he was gone.

"An old grievance," muttered Nordström in my ear. "He thinks he ought to have been the heir. He was the next male in succession after the old Count died, and the estates have never been held by a woman before."

Whatever may have been the cause of Sten's outbreak, its effect was to spoil the enjoyment of two, at least, of the party during the remainder of our sojourn at Rättvik. Of course no further allusion was made to the episode—indeed, the Countess's serenity had only been outwardly disturbed for a few seconds, and I daresay no one but myself suspected that her subsequent high spirits were assumed; but I, who could not choose but watch her constantly, detected a worn, harassed look that came over her face at intervals, and a suspicion of circles beneath her eyes which told me that black care was not far away. And when she was unhappy, how could I be anything else? Sten reappeared the next morning, looking neither more grim nor less so than of custom; and if he felt any shame at having forgotten himself in public, he at all events exhibited none.

We had our bear-hunt—a moderate success, resulting in the death of

Digitized by Google

one shaggy monster—the only one who showed himself. Bruin never came near the spot where I was posted. It was to Nordström that the honours of the day fell, and I am sure no one who saw his gleeful face afterwards could have grudged them to him. As for me, I was a little out of spirits, and did not care so much about distinguishing myself in the chase as I had done a few days before; though, to be sure, I should have liked well enough to have taken home a bearskin to show to my neighbours in England.

After all, it is in my possession at the present day, that same skin. It lies in the gun-room, and is almost as glossy as on that morning when my good Nordström, who had had it cured and mounted, brought it to my rooms and insisted upon my accepting it—as a memento of my visit to Dalecarlia, he said. I did not need anything to remind me of that week; but I took the gift, seeing that he would be really hurt if I refused; and it was the more valuable to me because it was a splendid skin, and I knew that it must have cost the good fellow a pang to part with it. Poor old Nordström! how have time and the world dealt with him, I wonder? It is odd to think that, if he is living now, he must be grey-headed and wrinkled like myself. Should I know him if I were to meet him in the street to-morrow? I doubt he wouldn't recognise me.

IV.

In Sweden, as in most northern latitudes, the transition from winter to summer is an abrupt one. To us in Stockholm the approaching change manifested itself by a week of the most comfortless weather; a week of gales and cold rain and alternating frosts and thaws; a week which upset the health of most people and tried the temper of all. Then, almost before we had realised that the ice was breaking up in earnest and the snow beginning to melt, the sun burst forth in his strength, the meadows were covered with wild flowers, the trees were sprinkled with touches of bright green, birds were singing in every wood and thicket, and the spring was upon us.

At that blithe season there was no lighter heart in all Sweden than mine; for I had declared my love to the Countess, and—she had not dismissed me. In what precise words I disburdened my heart of its secret signifies little. If I could recall them, and were inclined to set them down, they would doubtless make but a poor show on paper; but as a matter of fact, my memory upon that point is a complete blank. I no more know what I said than I can account for the sudden and ungovernable impulse which forced me to speak, against my better judgment, and in some sort against my will. I believe I was in a terrible state of agitation and alarm, dreading the worst, unable to surmise what might be the consequences of my rashness, yet no less unable to keep silence any longer. It would not have surprised me if she had ordered me out of her house, or if she had laughed me to scorn, or if she had upbraided me with taking an unworthy advantage of her kindness, and

Digitized by Google

had intimated that our acquaintance must end then and there. But she did none of these things. She heard me without comment or interruption of any kind, and answered me very kindly and quietly. It was evening, and she was sitting in a low chair before the wood fire, her eyes fixed upon the leaping flames. All the time she was talking to me, she kept on twisting and turning the rings on her slim fingers in a way that she had. She reminded me of that day at the Klädskammar when she had told me that she had not a friend in the world. "You have been my friend for several months now; I don't want to lose you. Let us try to forget what has just passed. I believe that you are sincere—at least, I believe that you are a little in love with me now; what you may be a year hence is another matter—but you have been dreaming of impossibilities. If there were no other reason to keep you from speaking to me again as you did just now, the difference in our ages would be a sufficient one."

"I am a year older than you," I cried eagerly.

She laughed, and said that years were not the true measure of age. "Your life is only just beginning; mine is to all intents and purposes over. I know exactly what lies before me between now and the churchyard; your future is still your own, and will be what you may choose to make it. Oh, I assure you I am an old woman, and you—you are a very young man."

I don't think I said much more at the time. I was not beseeching the Countess to marry me, nor dreaming of such a thing. I had told her that I loved her because silence was no longer possible to me, and she was not offended. I asked for nothing more.

But from that day forth there came a total change over the nature of our intercourse. It could hardly be otherwise. The common possession of that secret created a new link between us, and we were now something more than friends—though *what* we were I can't attempt to define. Not lovers, assuredly. Yet, as the weeks went on, it did come to pass that something very like lovers' quarrels and lovers' reconciliations occurred between us. For, alas! I had not, in truth, all the humility I laid claim to, and when a sudden fit of jealousy attacked me I could not, or at all events did not, always conceal it. She was very patient and forbearing with me at such times, affecting not to notice my boyish petulance, yet putting herself to pains in numberless little ways to overcome it; and I could not but perceive that she was glad when I was pleased, and sorry when I was sad.

Once only were we in danger of a serious difference, and then, indeed, she had every reason to be angry with my impertinence. I have said that the Countess was above slander's reach, but I have recorded also a hint of Nordström's to the effect that certain people had put their own base construction upon the rather peculiar position which Count Sten occupied in her household. Whispers, backbiters there must always be everywhere—men and women whose thoughts, like their lives, are

Digitized by Google

pitched in a low key; who, being unable to understand innocence, swear loudly that there is no such thing, and drown all dissentient voices in a chorus of laughter. The world, I think, generally joins in the laugh from fear of being thought simple. Such persons as these had a ready explanation of Count Sten's residence under his cousin's roof. "An ambitious woman, who had no fancy for a husband's authority," said they, with a shrug and a wink. "A jealous lover, who could not bring himself to let his mistress out of his sight—nay, rather, a discarded lover who could not be turned away lest awkward revelations should ensue"—Wasn't the whole thing as clear as mud? Now it fell out that, in the early days of June, a side-wind wafted these ugly mutterings for the first time to my ears, and I had not—I say it with shame—enough of right contempt for their source to despise them entirely. I allowed them to settle in my mind and rankle there; I kept asking myself what was the meaning of that authority over the Countess's actions which Sten often arrogated to himself; in a word, I brooded and fretted over the subject till she noticed that something was wrong with me, and asked me what was the matter. And then I told her. No sooner were the words uttered than I would have given anything to have held my tongue. Good, kind, and gentle as she was, she had an undoubted power of frightening those who offended her, and my first glance at her face showed me that I had overstepped the limits of that licence to which she had so graciously accustomed me. She did not, however, speak angrily, she only said, in rather cold accents—

"It is a poor kind of friend who can listen to such things and repeat them."

Of course I cast myself at her feet immediately, and implored pardon. I assured her that I had never given even an instant's credence to those abominable lies—God forbid that I should do so! But it had grieved me that there should be so much as a shadow of pretext for their utterance—that any mystery should hang over a matter which probably admitted of the simplest explanation. I could not bear to hear her attacked and to be unable to give her cowardly assailants the lie direct.

"In short," said she, interrupting me, "you want me to give you information for which you have no right to ask, and which I am surely entitled to withhold. I shall not gratify your curiosity, now or at any future time: it is better that you should know that at once. I wish I had been able to make you trust me a little more, but if you cannot it is not your fault, and I do not blame you. Why, after all, should you be different from the rest of the world?"

I could say no more. It was true that I wanted that information; but it was also true that, as she said, I had no right to demand it; and as for trusting her, why, I believed then, as I believe now, that no nobler or purer woman ever breathed. And so by degrees the shadow of this passing cloud vanished, and our mutual confidence was re-established.

Digitized by Google

In the meantime, the cause of its temporary disturbance was himself beginning to show symptoms of disquietude. Count Sten was no longer a friend of mine. When we met, he scowled at me silently, or, if he spoke, it was only to ask me how much longer I proposed to remain in Sweden, or whether, perchance, I had formed some design of spending the rest of my life there. His old formula of "You are a boy—you are only a boy!" was repeated less frequently, and pronounced, as it seemed to me, with a new inflexion of anxiety—as though it had dawned upon him that even boys might be formidable under some circumstances. Once or twice he went so far as to tell me that it was high time I should make myself acquainted with other countries, and to hint darkly at certain perils which might be in store for those who outstayed their welcome. I need hardly say that I was not much alarmed by such veiled threats. Indeed, I cared little enough for Sten's hostility or its possible developments, and so long as he left the Countess in peace he was heartily welcome to bully me. Nevertheless, I admit that I rejoiced greatly when some business connected with an unproductive fief of his in Finmark called him away from Stockholm upon a three weeks' visit to that remote province. I rejoiced to be rid of him on my own score; but I rejoiced the more because his absence brought such evident relief to my dear Countess. Whatever might be the mystery of her connection with him—and that there was some mystery she had as good as admitted—it was plainly irksome to her, and once he was gone she seemed to breathe a freer air.

The three weeks that followed were the best and happiest time of all my life. I haven't the heart to write much about them now. During these last few days I have been back to all the old places. I have seen again the dusky woods of Ulriksdal and the island palace of Drottningholm, and lonely Svartsjö, and all those creeks and inlets of the sea-girt Djurgård, which might be hundreds of miles away from any habitation of man were it not for the passage of an occasional tiny steamer, churning up the glassy water and sending a diminutive swell to set the bulrushes swaying by the bank. I have been to the Haga Park, too, where we used to ride, and to the beautiful cemetery where we sometimes wandered, and where she now lies at rest. I don't think there is an hour of that wondrous summer season of ceaseless daylight that has not come back to me in all its old freshness; but what I cannot quite remember is when and how I first dared to hope that she cared for me as I cared for her. I knew it while as yet I had not had the presumption to say to myself that it could be so; I knew it, though no word or hint of love had passed between us, and though my consciousness of her superiority was as strong as ever it had been. I do not speak of her superiority of rank and fortune, for upon these accidental adjuncts I did not waste a thought, but of her superiority to me as a human being. I could not be, nor approach to being, her equal, but I think that if matters had gone otherwise I might, through living with her, have

Digitized by Google

turned out a very different man from what I am to-day. I am as dull and commonplace a fellow as need be—we have never been noted for brains in our family, and the circumstances of my later life have fostered my inborn tendencies—but I suppose that in all of us there lurks a higher self, a germ of possible higher existence; and it was this latent good that the Countess had the gift of evoking. Looking back upon the past with the sober eyes of a quinquagenarian, I still feel convinced that no glamour of love misled me, and that all who were brought into contact with her owned the influence I have alluded to in a greater or less degree. So I say that she was infinitely above me. Yet if, in spite of all, it could be that she loved me, was I to let a sense of my unworthiness keep me for ever apart from her? I was beginning to put this question to myself in a hesitating, wondering sort of way, when the last sands in the hour-glass of my bliss—which had only been set to mark a period of three weeks—ran out, and brought Count Sten back to Stockholm.

He returned in the blackest of black humours. To me, when we met, he vouchsafed no sort of recognition except a piercing look, and ignoring my outstretched hand, whisked round and turned his back upon me. I walked away, laughing. What did it matter? Let him do his worst, he could not harm me much now, I thought. Alas! I was soon to learn that his power was greater than I had supposed.

Presenting myself next morning in the Regerings-gatan as usual, I was met with the startling news that the Countess had left Stockholm. Gone! and without a word! I could hardly believe my ears. The fat porter who stood in the half-open doorway saw my consternation and surveyed me with good-natured pity. "Yes," he said, the Countess had departed unexpectedly for her villa in the island of Gotland; Count Sten had accompanied her. He could not tell whether the family would return to Stockholm before proceeding to Dalecarlia for the remainder of the summer; but in all probability not. No message had been left for me.

My resolution was soon taken. I acted upon the impulse of the moment; though, if I had taken time for consideration, I should most likely have adopted no other course. That same night the little steamer which plies between Wisby and the mainland was bearing me past the wooded shores of Lake Mälar towards the Södertelje Canal and the Baltic. Come what might of it, thought I, there should now be an end and a finish of all uncertainty.

Little Gotland, rising in mid-Baltic with abrupt white cliffs, and sunny vineyards and mulberry gardens, might, by a stretch of analogy, be likened to a Swedish Capri, as Stockholm has sometimes been styled the Venice of the North. It has a wonderfully mild climate, considering its latitude, and not a few natural beauties of an unambitious order. The Countess used often to talk to me about this island, so little visited

Digitized by Google

now-a-days, so famous in mediæval times, when Wisby, its chief town, was the emporium of the great Oriental trade; when its streets were thronged by burghers in costly attire, and its churches were rich with gold and jewels; when its population exceeded by three times its present figure, and its merchants were powerful enough to declare their independence of Sweden. The Wisby of to-day is a quiet, sleepy old place, overshadowed by grey ruins, and encircled by the same battlemented walls which kept more than one besieger at bay before the fatal year of 1361, when Waldemar of Denmark sacked the place and carried off its treasures. The space inclosed by them is wide enough, in these days, to admit of many a garden and shady grass-plot between the little detached white houses. There are public promenades too, and an unpretending bathing establishment, and a few villas dotted about the heights above the town.

All these things I saw with half-conscious eyes as I stepped on shore and followed the white-headed lad who volunteered to carry my portmanteau up to the inn. I was beginning, I must confess, to have doubts as to the wisdom of the decisive step which I had taken. What right, after all, had I to dog the Countess's footsteps in this fashion? And might I not be made to look supremely foolish if it should turn out that she had written to me from Wisby to announce her sudden departure, and its reason; and if a letter to that effect were even now being delivered at my Stockholm lodgings? Chewing the cud of these disturbing reflections, I set out to stroll through the streets of the old town; for it was early morning, and some hours must yet elapse before I could with any propriety make my way into the Countess's presence. I visited, I am afraid to say how many ruined churches—St. Hans, St. Lars, St. Drotten, and a host of other oddly-named saints—ending with the unique Helge Ands Kyrka, a curious structure, built in such a manner as to form two churches, one above the other, with a large circular opening enabling those aloft to take part in a service conducted beneath them. I was standing on the verge of this aperture—the original use of which is a puzzle to antiquaries, I am told—with my eyes staring absently at the moss-grown pavement below, and my thoughts away in the clouds, when on a sudden my arm was gripped above the elbow, I was forced as nearly as possible over the brink, then thrown back with such violence that I reeled against the crumbling wall behind me, and Sten Adelcrantz's voice cried out—

"So I have caught you! You are in my power! Do you understand?—in my power! A moment ago I could have dashed your cursed life out of your body, and who would have been the wiser? A fall—an accident—what? So imprudent, these English travellers! Am I going to spare you? I don't know. Are you afraid, hey?—are you afraid?"

Well, I don't say but that I might have been a little afraid—for the man's eyes were blazing like a wild beast's, and his manner and speech

Digitized by Google

were those of a raving madman—if his ridiculous theatrical ways had not made me too angry for fear.

"You must be a great fool," I said, "to suppose that you can frighten me in that way. I flatter myself I am as good a man as you are, and if you think you can throw me down, you had better come on and try."

"No," he answered, folding his arms, and leaning back against the ivy-covered masonry; "you are not worth so much trouble. Go! I give you your life and your liberty. Make use of it; and take yourself away out of Gotland, quickly."

"Really," said I, pulling off my hat, and making him a fine bow, "you are very kind; but I assure you I have not the least intention of leaving Gotland for some time to come."

"And I will make bold to predict that you leave this evening. You young puppy!" he shouted, with a sudden return of fury, "do you think I do not know what has brought you here? You—a low-born foreigner—a man of no nobility at all—to marry a Countess Adelcrantz! Ha, ha! you almost make me laugh. Go! you have already done enough mischief. Go! curse you——"

The remainder of Count Sten's apostrophe must be left blank. Where he had picked up his knowledge of British expletives I can't imagine; but never from the mouth of any Thames bargee have I heard worse language, and somehow, his strong accent and grotesque gestures added more of horror than of absurdity to his vehement speech.

"I don't see that you will do much good by exciting yourself like this," I remarked at length. "I shall not take my dismissal from you, you know."

"Take it from her own lips then—to me it is all one! She is at home, and she will receive you—oh, yes! I have no doubt at all that she will receive you. Shall I show you the way?"

But I did not need to be shown the way. The Countess's villa had been pointed out to me from the deck of the steamer; and besides, I could have discovered it, without any assistance, from having heard her describe its position so often. I scrambled down the rough staircase, Sten making no effort to follow me, and was soon breasting the hillside, glad enough to have got away without a scuffle, yet full of dread as to what might still be before me.

I found her in a sunny, windy garden, pacing slowly up and down a kind of shrubbery which bordered the cliff. She did not seem astonished to see me; but her smooth forehead drew itself up into anxious lines, and when I approached her I could see that she had been crying.

"Oh! why have you come?" she exclaimed.

"I have come," I answered, "to hear what you are going to do with my life. You know that it belongs to you, and always will, whether you send me away or not. Oh, dear Countess! no one will ever love you as much as I do. I don't pretend to be your equal, though—if that were of any consequence—I am not low-born, as he says——"

Digitized by Google

"As who says? Have you seen Sten?"

"Yes, just now, among the ruins."

"You have seen him! What did he tell you?"

"He told me nothing. He cursed me, and ordered me off; and I answered that I would not take my dismissal from him."

"Ah, poor fellow! poor fellow!" she murmured sadly, looking away from me at the blue sea far beneath her.

"What—do you pity him?" I cried, "and have you no pity for me? Tell me, Countess, what is the meaning of it all? What is this mystery?"

"I can't explain," she answered quietly. "I am very sorry for you, but I can't explain."

"Then I will find out for myself," I returned, with some heat. "One thing is certain—that sullen scoundrel is at the bottom of it all."

"No, no—poor Sten!—it is not his fault—you don't understand. It is not possible for me to marry you, or anybody. Why would you not believe when I told you so long ago? We might have been friends, but that is all over now, and you must go away, and I shall never see you again." And then, all of a sudden, she burst into tears.

I can't tell how it came about that I was holding her in my arms and kissing her golden curls, while her face was buried on my shoulder. It only lasted a moment. She dragged herself away from me, and stood leaning against the back of a stone bench, her breath coming in short gasps.

"For heaven's sake, leave me! If he finds us like this, some misfortune will happen. Good-bye—good-bye! I thank you from my heart for your love—I shall never forget you—I shall never love anyone but you—but we must not meet again after this. Now go, before he comes back."

Of course I did not go. Was it likely that I should go when I had just heard from her own lips that she loved me? Was it likely that I should allow anything to part us after such a confession as that? Yet, after all, I failed. I remained a long time in the garden there, questioning, urging, entreating; but nothing availed. I could obtain no more from her than an assurance that she could not marry; that neither she nor anyone living was to blame; and finally, after much pressure, a reluctant admission that she might conceivably, at some future date, be free.

"But that is very unlikely ever to happen," she added; "and besides, we ought not to wish for it. It could only be if—if—but I must not tell you. It is a chance, a remote chance—that is all. Do not think any more about it."

I clung, however, to this faint hope, in default of a better. I made her promise that, should the event she had alluded to ever arise, she would send for me at once. I gave her my address in England, and entreated her to write to me sometimes, but that she would not do. It was

Digitized by Google

better not, she said. And so we parted; and Sten's prediction was fulfilled, for the same steamer which had brought me to Gotland in the morning took me back at night.

I never saw or heard from her again; her secret is a secret to me still. Perhaps it is because I am a somewhat dull man that I have failed to hit upon any plausible key to the enigma; but though I have pondered the matter through many an idle day and sleepless night, I have never been able to guess at the nature of her hidden bonds; and it is a long time now since I gave up trying to do so. For my Countess has been dead and at rest these twenty years and more; and since no earthly troubles of hers can vex her longer, why should I harp upon them? Whatever they may have been, they would not, if they were known, cast any discredit upon her memory: of that I am sure.

For two years I heard of her from Nordström, who, like the good fellow that he was, kept up a constant correspondence with me, though I never let him into the secret of my hopeless love. Then, one morning, came a sorrowful letter telling me of her sudden death. It was a chill taken on returning home after a ball that killed her, Nordström said. Her illness lasted barely twenty-four hours; and while the doctors were still assuring anxious inquirers that there was no danger, she was passing quietly away.

I never allow my thoughts to dwell much upon that time. Some people, I suppose, would have had a brain fever; but I had not such luck. I did not fall ill for a single day; I went about my ordinary occupations as usual, and I doubt whether anyone noticed a change in me, unless it were my old hunter, Cronstadt. He might have broken my neck if he had liked; but ours is not a hard country, and the old horse was a first-rate fencer, and so nothing worse nor better befell me than a sousing in the Blackwater.

At a farmers' club dinner, the other day, some one was good enough to propose my health. "Our worthy and esteemed county member," says he, "is one of those men of whom England is justly proud—which, I am sorry to add, gentlemen, that there is not a many of them left in these bad times. A liberal landlord, a hospitable host, a steady, though unobtrusive supporter of his party in Parliament," &c. &c. Well, yes; I think I may say that I have been unobtrusive. "But," continues this wag, "we have one grudge against our respected friend, and it is a long-standing one. He has not done his dooty by the ladies—I say he has not done his dooty by the fair sex. Now, gentlemen, I hope I may be permitted, in this connection, to quote a good old English proverb—namely, 'It is never too late to mend.'" Whereat we have much cheering and laughter.

I have had to submit to this kind of thing for such a number of years now that it no longer annoys me in the least. At first I used to jump up quite red and flustered, regretting that my friend Mr. Turnip-tops should have thought fit to bring forward matters of purely domestic

Digitized by Google

interest at a public meeting; but now-a-days I am charmingly jocular on the subject of single blessedness, and the way in which I poke fun at certain of my neighbours who are more blessed with sons and daughters than with means to support them is so exquisitely witty that my audience laugh themselves purple in the face over it regularly once a year. Would they laugh, I wonder, if the true reason of my celibacy were made known to them? Possibly not; for I have always held that there exists deep down in the bucolic mind an unsuspected fund of sentiment, together with an obstinate tenacity of all things—love among the rest. Perhaps I am myself an example of the truth of what I maintain. It may be stupidity, it may be a defective imagination that has kept me so doggedly faithful to my ideal; but the fact remains that my life has held but one romance, and that I have been true to it.

Why, then, should I not hug myself in a complacent self-respect? Why have I had to admit to myself over and over again, during these last days, that I have not come out an altogether triumphant victor from my long contest with that insidious old adversary, Time? I pace the old streets; I wander along the well-remembered paths and alleys; I gaze at the familiar, unchanged prospects. I am the same man, with the same heart, who dwelt in this city five and twenty years ago—

> But yet I know, where'er I go,
> That there hath pass'd away a glory from the earth.

I suppose it all means—to wind up a long story—that I have lost my youth. My youth; but not my love. No; I acknowledge, with a thankful and humble heart, that neither time nor solitude has been able to rob me of that. It has been mine in the past; it is mine in the present; it will be mine, as I believe, in the glad future, when my spirit shall rush to claim it upon the other side of the grave.

V.

Two days later.—I have seen Nordström. I picked him out directly from among some two or three hundred people who were drinking coffee and listening to the band at the Strömparterre last night; and though he did not recognise me with quite equal readiness, I had no reason to grumble at my welcome when once I had explained who I was. Nothing would satisfy him but that I should go home to supper with him, and make the acquaintance of his wife, a comely, middle-aged lady, and his two pretty daughters. Nordström himself has grown stout, and is as grey as I am. After supper he led me to his smoking-room to enjoy, as he said, a good cigar and a good talk over old times; and then it was that I took occasion to ask him casually whether he knew anything of Sten Adelcrantz.

"Ah, the poor fellow!" he said. "Did you never hear? He died, raving mad, in an asylum long ago. His was a sad story," Nordström

Digitized by Google

added, after a pause. "He never recovered the shock of our poor Countess's death, and only survived her by a few months."

I hardly know what impelled me to open my lips to this kindly, garrulous Swede upon a subject which I have hitherto kept secret and sacred; perhaps it was meeting some one who had known her, and hearing her name mentioned after so long an interval; perhaps it was because, ever since I have been in Stockholm, I have experienced something of the Ancient Mariner's craving to unfold my tale to a listener—any listener. At all events I made a clean breast of it; and, as matters turned out, I was thankful that I had done so. For when he heard me to the end, and had expressed a great deal of kind sympathy with me and interest in my story, he said:—

"Well, now you have had confidence in me; and in return I will tell you something that I have never mentioned to anyone before—not even to my wife. You must know that I was very nearly the last man who saw Sten Adelcrantz in his senses. It was a few nights after the Countess's death that I found him striding up and down the Carl XII.'s Torg, bareheaded, throwing his arms about, and muttering to himself in a sort of frenzy. It was a bitter cold night, and I was afraid of what might happen if I were to leave him alone there; so I persuaded him to come back to my rooms with me, and there, after a time, he became a little calmer, and told me some things which astonished me very much. I don't suppose he would ever have spoken so openly if he had been quite himself; but he was in great agitation, accusing himself of having murdered his cousin, and I don't know what besides; and all through his statement he kept appealing to me to say whether he had not been right, and whether anyone, placed as he was, could have acted differently. It made me very sorry to hear him. It would take too long to repeat all that he told me in his own words; but, summed up, it came to this. Old Count Adelcrantz, who died a widower and childless some time in the beginning of the century, bequeathed all his estates to his nearest rightful heir. No one questioned that this was his nephew, Count Carl, who accordingly entered upon his inheritance. Many years afterwards this Count Carl, grown old and half silly, took it into his head to marry the lady whom we knew—(she was forced into the match by her friends and consented most unwillingly, poor thing!)—and some years after that again, his second cousin Sten accidentally came into possession of the clearest proof of Carl's illegitimacy. So there was no doubt but that, under his great-uncle's will, the whole of the Adelcrantz estates belonged to him, and he had only to show his documents in order to dispossess the false heir. But you remember poor Sten's craze—he thought more of the family honour than of all the money and lands in the world, and it seemed to him that it would be a terrible thing to let the world hear of a scandalous affair which must have occurred close upon a century ago. Besides, Count Carl was a very old man, and it would perhaps have been rather cruel to turn him out of house and home when he had already one

Digitized by Google

foot in the grave. So the only action Sten took was to go to his cousin, convince him of the justice of his claim, and agree to hush the affair up—it being, of course, understood that the estates would come to their rightful owner in due course. What he did not calculate upon was that that rascally old Carl should break faith, and make a will leaving every stick and stone to his widow. This put Sten in an awkward position; and, by way of additional complication, he happened, as you know, to be desperately in love with the Countess. The simplest solution would, of course, have been their marriage; but this, unfortunately, she could by no means be brought to consent to. So, thinking he had a full right to do so, he made her swear solemnly that, if she would not marry him, she would at all events never marry anyone else. He was ready to surrender his own claim to the property; but he was firmly resolved that no one who did not bear the name of Adelcrantz should ever enjoy it."

"But do you mean to tell me," I broke in at this point of Nordström's narrative, "that the Countess would consent to such a bargain? —that she would dream of keeping what did not belong to her? I don't believe a word of it."

"Ah, there comes the singular part of the story. Sten admitted that over and over again she had implored him upon her knees to assert his rights and to set her free, but that he had refused. He represented to her that the honour of the family demanded some sacrifice at her hands, and that as he was ready to accept the position of a guest in the house of which he was the lawful lord, so she must not shrink from a duty imposed upon her by circumstances. He had an odd kind of ascendency over her; she was always a little afraid of him, I think; and I can easily understand that, feeling the great injustice that had been done to him, she may have thought that the smallest compensation she could make was to give in to his wishes. It was a painful position for both of them. Sten said he had persuaded himself—and I believe he was sincere—that his sole object was to preserve the house of Adelcrantz from disgrace; but no doubt he was glad to have the power of forcing the woman whom he loved to remain single. He half acknowledged as much at the end; he said there was some one whom she cared for; and I think you could not have helped pitying him if you had seen his remorse and misery. He kept on repeating, 'Oh, if I could bring her back to life again, she should have her lands and her husband too!—her lands and her husband too!' Poor fellow! The whole thing was a terrible tragedy."

That is the substance of what Nordström told me, puffing at his cigar, in the long twilight. He said he had condensed Sten's narrative; I, in my turn, have somewhat condensed his. What he said gave me a great deal of pain at the time. It seemed to me that the happiness of two lives had been most needlessly sacrificed to gratify a madman's whim. I was almost—God forgive me!—angry with her for having allowed such a fanciful obstacle to come between us. But now I no

Digitized by Google

longer feel quite as I did. She may have acted mistakenly; but her motive was a noble one. In that, as in all things, she thought of others before herself; and who am I to sit in judgment upon one so far above me?

And so the story of my life's romance is now complete: that much at least I have gained by my return to these familiar scenes. As I write by the open window, I can see the stir and bustle of this cheerful city going on just as of old. The flags are fluttering above the kiosks in the Strömparterre, the little steam-launches are plying busily from shore to shore, and yonder, across the Norrbro, comes King Oscar II. in his coach and four, the guard turning out with solemn rub-a-dub-dub to salute him, just as their predecessors used to salute his father in days of yore. I don't quarrel with Stockholm for not being in mourning; I don't expect the world to stand still because it has lost one unit of its population; but for my own part, I am a little sick of sunshine and merriment, and I think it is high time for me to pack up my clothes and set my face once more in the direction of my native fogs.

Digitized by Google

Fighting Fitzgerald.

THE portrait of Fighting Fitzgerald has been painted by enemies as vindictive as any that ever slandered the dead, and is therefore distorted in every feature.

George Robert—his baptismal name—was born in 1749. Through his father, a fair specimen of the profligate and reckless Irish landlords of long ago, he was the heir of Torlough, an estate near Castlebar, then worth 4,000*l.* a year; and also the representative of the Desmond, the eldest branch of the haughty Norman-Irish Fitzgeralds. His mother came of a race so conspicuously eccentric that the saying ran concerning it—"God made men, women, and—Harveys." Separating from her husband after two years of miserable married life, she remained for many years one of the gay leaders of gayest London society. She was the sister of that splendid singularity, the Earl-Bishop of Derry.

Brought up in England from infancy to his sixteenth year, George Robert was for a time an Eton scholar. In 1766 he was gazetted to a lieutenancy in the 69th regiment, then stationed in Ireland. Here, while yet a mere boy, he fought several duels, in which he displayed not a little generous feeling, and in one of which he lost a portion of his skull. In February 1770 he made a love-match with one of the daughters of a redoubtable Irish personage, the Right Honourable J. Conolly—otherwise known as "the Great Commoner." Thus he obtained a fortune of 30,000*l.*, and eventually became the brother-in-law of an Irish viceroy.

Ten thousand pounds of the money was handed over to the owner of Torlough, who was then, as ever, in pecuniary difficulties. In return he signed deeds securing George Robert 1,000*l.* a year in the present and the reversion of his estate, whole and unimpaired. This settlement was the main cause of our hero's faults and misfortunes, and ultimately of his doom.

Immediately after his marriage George Robert resigned his lieutenancy and went to France. At this period his appearance was singularly striking, nor did it ever undergo any change. The portrait painted of him at twenty remained perfectly true to the last.

He was under the middle height; "his person very slight and juvenile; his countenance extremely mild and insinuating. The existing taste for splendid attire he carried to the utmost. The button and loop of his hat, his sword-knot, and his shoe-buckles were brilliant with diamonds. His coat and vest were as rich as French brocade and velvet could make them. He wore a muff on his left arm, and two enamelled

Digitized by Google

watches, with a multitude of seals dangling from either fob." Another writer describes the muff as "drawing the eye of the public by its uncommon size; it fell from his chin to his toes!"

Indeed, his fondness for glittering baubles and ultra-finery amounted to a passion. At a later date, when his house at Torlough was sacked by the mob of Castlebar, he estimated his loss, in jewels and embroidered robes, at upwards of 20,000*l.*

Among the articles purloined on that occasion he mentions—"a casquet containing a complete set of diamond vest buttons, two large emeralds, a hat band with five or six rows of Oriental pearls worth 1,500*l.*, a large engraved amethyst, a gold watch and chain studded with diamonds, several other gold watches and seals, a great number of antique and modern rings, gold shoe and knee buckles, silver shaving apparatus, several pairs of silver shoe and knee buckles, with 6,300*l.* worth of other jewels."

This diminutive, youthful-looking, and ornate Fitzgerald was pronounced "an effeminate little being" by those of his own sex who did not know him. As to those who did—"He was so light, foppish, and distinguished, none could think he was the man who had fought more duels than any other of his time."

The dames, without exception, pronounced him "a fascinating creature." Nor was the opinion confined to them. One who owed him no goodwill, Sir Jonah Barrington, allows that "a more polished and elegant gentleman was not to be met with." And the renowned "Dick" Martin, who met him pistol to pistol and got the worst of the encounter, confessed the strong impression made upon him by "the elegant and gentleman-like appearance" of his antagonist.

Even polished Paris admitted itself surpassed in all that was graceful and splendid by this extraordinary young Irishman. "Qui est ce seigneur?" asked the Parisians of one another, on seeing him for the first time. "D'où vient-il? Il n'est pas François. Quelle magnificence! Quelle politesse! Est-il possible qu'il soit étranger!"

Let us now conceive this dazzling outside as covering the best and boldest rider, the deftest swordsman, the surest shot, and the most reckless gambler of the day; let us conceive him with literary tastes, an author, and a patron of authors; with as much subtlety as daring; with intensest pride of race and intensest contempt for all that was vulgar; and with a repugnance that was absolutely passionate for the gross vices and carnalities and the coarse amusements of his era—and we shall have some idea of what "Fighting Fitzgerald" really was.

Received with enthusiasm by the Parisians, our hero plunged headlong into what was then the all-absorbing pursuit—gambling. Thanks to it and to his inordinate taste for splendour, not a farthing of his twenty thousand pounds was left by the end of the first year. As to his annuity, he never received a penny of it.

He might have found a home with the Bishop, who could see nothing

Digitized by Google

but perfection in him; or, had he desired it, nothing would have been easier than for his numerous powerful friends to have thrust him into a lucrative sinecure. But he could not bring himself to quit delightful Paris and its whirl of refined excitement. So he sent his wife home to her friends, and remained in the gay capital, relying on the gambling skill he had acquired by this time for the support of his splendour. And here he showed to the fullest that strange capacity for rapid and complete transformation of character which seems peculiar to the Celtic race. In an incredibly short space of time he was all over the cruel and remorseless gambler, yet still as brilliant and fascinating as ever.

Among our hero's chosen associates was the Count d'Artois—afterwards Charles X.—who was then the votary of every pleasure, and notably as keen a gambler as Paris could boast of. The Prince had pocketed a very royal share of George Robert's fortune; and when that was gone, continued to pocket an equally royal share of his dashing young friend's winnings. On one occasion Charles happened to win three thousand louis, which Fitzgerald would not pay down. The latter vanished therefore for a time from the presence of the Prince. A few days later he reappeared, with his purse replenished, but forgot to pay his debt of honour. Nevertheless, he presumed to take a part in the game that was going on, betting, in his usual plunging style, "a thousand louis against the Prince's card."

Raising his head, Charles remarked very coolly, "You owe me three thousand louis; are you prepared to pay?"

"No."

"Then how dare you bet in my presence?"

Suiting the action to the word, his Royal Highness took Fitzgerald by the shoulder, led him to the stair-head, and dismissed him with an ignominious kick.

George Robert was now in an unpleasant position. As a man who had been publicly dishonoured, he was excluded from good society. Nor could he set himself right by crossing swords with the Prince, who was beyond the reach of a cartel, even from the head of the house of Desmond. To a common mind there was no getting out of the predicament, except by flying from the land or from life. Our youth, however, was not the possessor of a common mind. Disdaining both the alternatives, he hit upon a means of setting himself right with everybody, and that too with *éclat*.

Louis XVI. was a mighty hunter of the deer, and Fitzgerald, the *beau idéal* of horsemanship, was a constant follower of the royal pack. Shortly after the affair of the kick, the deer took a course not at all in harmony with the views of the mass of the hunters, making straight for the Seine.

Along the bank ran a road, fenced from the river by a wall some three feet high on the land side, but having a descent of fourteen or fifteen feet towards the current, which here ran deep and strong.

Digitized by Google

The deer leapt the wall, swam the stream, and gained the forest on the other side. So did the dogs. But all the hunters pulled up, with a single exception—Fitzgerald.

He dashed at the wall with a cheer and cleared it, amid the astonishment of the gentlemen and the screams of the ladies. Everybody concluded that horse and rider must surely be drowned. In a few minutes, however, the gallant horse was observed breasting the river and making straight for the opposite shore, which it reached in safety with its rider. The latter did not even lose a stirrup in achieving the harebrained feat.

Fitzgerald became more popular than ever with the courtiers. But though he had effaced his ignominy from every other mind, he could not forget it himself. As soon, therefore, as etiquette would allow he transferred himself to England.

Here he appeared under very favourable circumstances. The Harveys held high place in society, of which his mother, Lady Mary Fitzgerald, was one of the leaders. But our hero's most effective recommendation to the more exclusive London circles was the great reputation that had preceded him across the Channel. And a conspicuous item of that reputation was the fact that he had already fought *eleven* duels, though not yet twenty-four!

He soon became a favourite of fashion; and, moreover, a social leader himself—gathering round him a body of golden youth who formed themselves in most essentials on him. And foremost among those exquisites were the "wicked" Lord Lyttleton, and the officers of the elegant regiment of the day, Burgoyne's Light Horse.

In company with these curled darlings, he frequented all brilliant assemblies, surpassing everybody else in glitter and deep play, and treating whoever and whatever he encountered at variance with his delicate tastes with merciless ridicule and scorn. The last peculiarity involved him in a number of scrapes, including one duel, from all of which he extricated himself in a way that added to his brilliant reputation. At length an event occurred which showed his darker side, and brought forth in very bold relief his more repulsive characteristics as a gambler and a duellist.

Shortly after his arrival in England a youth known as Daisy Walker—the son of an honest tradesman who had left him 90,000*l.*—had a cornetcy purchased for him in Burgoyne's Light Horse by his rather injudicious guardians. The plebeian, who was still a minor, was very much looked down upon by the exquisites of that refined corps. Nevertheless they condescended to introduce him to all the fashionable follies of the day, and especially to win his money.

Ere many months had flown the Daisy was in difficulties. All his ready money had passed into the purses of his acquaintances, and with it bills to a large amount. Fitzgerald, a constant visitor at mess and one of the largest winners, held some of the bills to the nominal value of 3,000*l.*

Walker's guardians now interposed. Removing their charge from

Digitized by Google

the regiment, and indeed from fashionable society for the remainder of his minority, they compounded for his debts of all sorts, Fitzgerald receiving 500*l.* for his share. Our punctilious gentleman took the money, but not as Walker's guardians intended. In his eyes debts of honour were not to be compounded for like rascally trade debts; and he held himself ready to claim the residue of his account whenever the Daisy should furnish him with an occasion. This was all very French; and our hero was intensely French in most respects.

Walker chafed a good deal under the restraint imposed by his guardians, and the moment it was removed hurried back to his old haunts and habits. Fitzgerald kept him well in view, but made no move until he happened to surprise the Daisy making a heavy bet on a forthcoming race. No sooner had Walker booked his wager than Fitzgerald—following the august example of the Count d'Artois—met him with a claim for 2,500*l.* Walker refused to pay, and, for the next six months, was made supremely uncomfortable by the persecutions of Fitzgerald.

The Daisy was not remarkable for valour, and did his best to avoid Fitzgerald, who, on his part, was equally assiduous in hunting up the Daisy; and a game of hide-and-seek was maintained between the two which furnished the lookers-on with a good deal of amusement. Walker could not keep away from fashionable resorts, but he attended them in fear and trembling—always keeping a sharp eye on the door and hastening to retreat at the first indication of the approach of his terror. But he could not avoid his fate. The two met at length on Ascot racecourse, and Fitzgerald caned the Daisy, who was now compelled to challenge him. The duel, which had a good many sides, including a ludicrous one, was fought in the Low Countries towards the end of 1774.

Walker, being entitled to first shot, fired and missed; because, just as he pulled trigger, Fitzgerald flung himself into his favourite duelling attitude, and thus greatly diminished his height. It was now Fitzgerald's turn, and Walker prepared himself for the shot with very evident trepidation. Our hero saw what was passing in his mind, and resolved to take advantage of it. Instead of firing, he affected to consider his pistol somewhat out of order, and spent some minutes in hammering the flint with a key. The pistol being adjusted at length, he then turned round and lectured Walker's second concerning his neglect of some of the rules of the duels. The second received the rebuke with due humility, and hastened to rectify his error. All this time, be it observed, the poltroon was waiting to be shot at. At last all was right, and Fitzgerald, taking a very deliberate and ostentatious aim, lowered his pistol and apologised in very graceful terms for having used his cane on Walker. The latter and his second—being evidently unacquainted with the law of the duels, which insisted that a caning was always to be apologised for before the caner could take a shot at the caned one—indulged in a feeling of relief, which was rather premature.

Having made his apology, Fitzgerald resumed his fighting air and

Digitized by Google

demanded his 2,500*l.* or the resumption of the duel at the point where it had been interrupted. Walker was much inclined to comply, but his sense of the overwhelming disgrace which must attend submission mastered his terror, and he refused to pay. Levelling his pistol, but lingering on his aim, Fitzgerald offered to bet anybody a thousand guineas that he would hit Walker wherever he pleased, but of course received no reply.

"You won't take the bet?" cried the duellist; "then here goes at his right shoulder!"

The bullet struck the spot indicated, but did not penetrate, thanks to a couple of thick coats which Walker wore. However, it inflicted a contusion which disabled the arm and terminated the duel, though the quarrel itself was kept up much longer.

On his return to town Fitzgerald reiterated his demand for "his" money or another meeting. Both alternatives being rejected, he attempted to renew the quarrel on other grounds, proclaiming everywhere that Walker had been "padded" on the late occasion, and had thus escaped injury by fraud. This device proving as ineffectual as the others, and society frowning on the system of hunting his victim about which our hero had resumed, the latter published an account of the affair which certainly hit Walker very hard, but which also revolted most people by the cynical frankness of its avowals, gambling sentiments, and duellistic practices which, though common enough on the Continent, had not yet obtained currency in England.

In short, the Walker business—displaying as it did so many un-English qualities in our hero—ruined him for ever in London society. Nobody cared to consort with him afterwards. He therefore took an early opportunity of returning to France and to close gambling partnership with an old comrade, Major Baggs, like himself an ex-officer of the 69th, and the original of "Captain Duff Brown" in Charles Lever's novel, *Barrington.*

There was then a mania among French fashionables for English horses and for horse-racing as it was in England; and Fitzgerald (in addition to his gambling speculations) took to supplying his Parisian acquaintances with the one and to initiating them into the practices of the other, making full profit the while out of their sublime ignorance of both. Somehow or other, few people can have much to do with horse transactions without contracting some of the peculiarities of the low-lived horse-dealer, and ere long George Robert became rather too well known for such peculiarities. A bit of sharp practice of this kind enabled him to fasten his acquaintance on another Irish celebrity of that day, Archibald Hamilton Rowan, who happened to be then in Paris.

Rowan, who was very unwilling to have anything to do with Fitzgerald, but whose easy good-nature would not allow him to repel the other's advances, has left an account of this acquaintance. It is the only notice extant of this portion of Fitzgerald's career, but it is sufficient. A

Digitized by Google

better picture than it gives of our hero as he then was could not be desired. This perfection, however, is not due to any artistic skill on the part of Rowan, but to the fact that Fitzgerald was one of those people whose attitudes are always picturesque in the highest degree, and who interest us in any portrait, however coarsely drawn, which has the merit of fidelity.

Not long before, a Mr. Sandford, a very young man and a stranger in the French capital, was fastened upon by Fitzgerald, who was always on the watch for such victims, and led him to supper at the most dangerous house in the city—that kept by Baggs. Play of the deepest kind succeeded the supper, and Sandford lost a large sum. Then came a dispute between the plunderers respecting the division of the booty; and this developed rapidly into a mortal quarrel, the true cause of which neither cared to avow. Baggs, who considered himself the party aggrieved, found a more decent pretext, asserting that he had lent Fitzgerald much money from time to time, and that the latter refused to acknowledge the debt.

One evening, when Fitzgerald was quitting the theatre with Rowan, he encountered Baggs in the lobby. There was a short but sharp dispute between the gamblers. In the end George Robert drew his glove over Baggs's face, an insult to which Baggs replied by dashing his hat in the other's eyes.

Here the guard appeared and laid hold of the Major, while Fitzgerald slipped out and was driven off by Rowan. Several days passed, Baggs remaining under arrest and Fitzgerald finding shelter in Rowan's hotel. At length the Major was released, and it was arranged that the parties should meet on Austrian territory, in the vicinity of Valenciennes, and fight the quarrel out. Baggs was to be attended by a Captain O'Toole, and his opponent by a Mr. Hodges, and the parties were to leave Paris on the same day.

The day came, and Baggs and his second started as arranged. Hodges did not appear, but sent his principal a note in which he apprised him that he had just been seized by a severe attack of gout, and could not move. A messenger was despatched in the hope of arresting Baggs, but the Major was gone. Fitzgerald now appealed piteously to Rowan to save his honour; and the latter, who had no desire to mix himself with the affair, consented, though reluctantly, to act as second.

Here occurred a difficulty which, as Rowan significantly remarks, explained the sudden attack of gout which had prostrated Hodges—Fitzgerald had no money, and no means of raising any. He drew a bill for 100*l.*, but nobody would cash it until Rowan was induced to endorse it. Ultimately the good-natured second had to pay the money.

The pair set off in pursuit of Baggs and O'Toole, and soon reached Valenciennes. A suitable piece of ground was soon met with, and the distance—eight paces—measured. Baggs knew too well with whom he had to deal to let him have his pet distance, five paces. When the parties were placed in position, Baggs beckoned his second and whispered

Digitized by Google

a few words. The next moment O'Toole drew Rowan aside, and, apologising for the remark, said he had reason to think that Fitzgerald was *plastronné*—a word meaning padded, or plated. What followed was remarkable.

Overhearing the remark, Fitzgerald threw off his coat and vest, "exhibiting himself," writes Rowan, "to our great astonishment, with his shirt tied round the body by a broad ribbon, *couleur du rose*, while two narrower ones closed his shirt sleeves round the upper and lower joints of the arms." George Robert gave an explanation of this which we omit. It did not satisfy Rowan; and it does not satisfy ourselves. The Major was afterwards examined to the same extent, and no further, though he invited Rowan, in his bluff, English way, to "Feel, sir; feel." The duel then went on.

"Baggs sank on his quarters," writes Rowan, "something like the Scottish lion in the Royal arms, while Fitzgerald stood as one who has made a lounge in fencing. They fired together, and were in the act of levelling their second pistols, when Baggs fell on his side, saying, 'Sir, I am wounded.'

"'But you are not dead!' said Fitzgerald.

"At the same moment he discharged his second pistol at his fallen antagonist.

"Baggs immediately started on his legs and advanced on Fitzgerald, who, throwing the empty pistol at him, quitted his station, and kept a zigzag course across the field, Baggs following. I saw the flash of Baggs' second pistol, and, at the same moment, Fitzgerald lay stretched on the ground. I was just in time to catch Baggs as he fell, after firing his second shot. He swooned from intense pain, the small bone of his leg being broken. Mr. Fitzgerald now came up, saying—

"'We are both wounded; let us go back to our ground.'"

Such a proposal could not be entertained; and the wounded duellists —for Fitzgerald had been hit in the thigh—were carried off the field.

"I could not help asking him," adds Rowan, meaning George Robert, "how he came to fire his second pistol. His reply was: 'I should not have done it to any man but Baggs.'"

Our hero was long confined by his wound, which left him slightly lame for the rest of his life. When he recovered he went straight to Ireland, which he reached towards the end of 1775.

Thanks to his uncle, the Bishop of Derry, with whom he was always a favourite, he was able to make a suitable appearance in Dublin. Here he fixed himself for some years, and met with the greatest success; and here, again, he displayed that capacity for rapid and complete change of character which we have already remarked. In untoward circumstances he had flung aside his nobler qualities and conformed to degradation, until it seemed as if that, and no other, had been his native state; and in success he cast off the baseness which penury had fastened to him, and resumed his old self with the same facility and completeness.

Digitized by Google

For the next three years he was in most things the superb representative of the haughtiest race on the island. His house in Merrion Street was the resort of all that was high-bred in Dublin society. He was the idol of the mob too; for in addition to his dash, glitter, and fighting reputation—things always dear to the Irish—he took impetuously to patriotism, which was then a passion with all that was great and noble in the land, as well as with the masses.

He took the lead wherever he went; outshining all that was brilliant; humiliating all the swaggerers—notably those legal and pugnacious celebrities, Barry Yelverton and Fitzgibbon—two men who remained ever after his mortal enemies; and winning, it is said, no less than a hundred thousand pounds during this short period.

Whatever he might have been elsewhere, he always gambled in princely style in Ireland. His stake was never less than fifty guineas—his sideboard was heaped with rouleaus to that amount; while he seldom stirred abroad without having a hundred of them carried along by a couple of servants in gorgeous liveries.

There was no sharp practice now, but much wild wagering, on which tradition still loves to dwell.

Other traditions tell how he dealt with the "bucks," a plague then infesting the streets of Dublin, and, indeed, the streets of every town in Ireland. These "bucks" were half-bred young fellows of some means and high animal spirits, whose sole occupation consisted in making town-life intolerable to quiet people. Parliament was more than once compelled to frame penal enactments with the view of restraining their peculiar ruffianism; but as there was no properly constituted police to enforce them these statutes were of small effect.

Among the tricks of the Dublin bucks was this. One of them would take his stand in the middle of a crossing on a dirty day, and, drawing his sword thrust everybody who wanted to pass into the mud. It was a common thing to see half-a-dozen or more of these unpleasant sentries lining a leading thoroughfare all ready to afford each other support. Nor were they content with merely obstructing the passage. They knocked off hats, ripped up garments, and pricked the limbs of the wearers with the points of their weapons, and broke ribald jests on them the while—to the vast amusement of the ragamuffins who used to collect in the vicinity. If anybody turned on one of these bullies the rest would rush up and form a circle round him; then seizing him by the collar and the arms they would prick him about the legs until they considered him punished sufficiently.

Fitzgerald proposed to some of his brother exquisites and fire-eaters that they should clear the streets of the metropolis of these pests. It was just the sort of proposal to suit such daring spirits, and an association was immediately formed to carry it out. After Fitzgerald himself the most conspicuous members were three Sligo notabilities—Mat Ormsby, Abram Fenton, and Pat O'Hara, one of whom, round whose

Digitized by Google

knees the writer has often played, attained the patriarchal age of ninety-seven. Like their leader they were consummate swordsmen, and dandies of the first water—the Dandy being in all essentials the antipodes of the Buck—a distinction which people who write about the Ireland of the past are very apt to forget.

The association set to work most heartily, and in this way. Whenever a fine afternoon followed a showery morning they would sally forth in knots of four or five, each being followed by a lusty valet carrying an oak sapling. On reaching the haunts of the bucks the servants kept the rabble off while the exquisites did the work they had undertaken. For a couple of months few days passed without three or four affrays between the bucks and the dandies, in which the former invariably came off second-best. Ere long the mainstay of the bucks, the mob, turned against them too. This meant that defeat was sure to be followed by hooting and pelting with mud and stones. Then the pleasant pastime of blocking the thoroughfares in broad daylight was abandoned. Oddly enough, the man who had the chief hand in putting down the bucks for the time, is the one who more than anybody else is credited with their brutal tricks.

Had Fitzgerald confined himself to Dublin the probabilities are that he would have remained to the last a social leader, and been remembered only as the fitting companion of Charlemont, Alvanly, Flood, Ponsonby, and the rest, who made the choicer circles of the Irish metropolis in those days the most brilliant in Europe. But his evil fate drew him down to semi-barbarous Mayo, where he—the essence of Parisian refinement—was as much out of place and as much misunderstood as he would have been among the Zulus.

On his return to Ireland, George Robert found his father—who was evidently in his dotage—in the hands of three very dangerous persons. These were, Charles Lionel, our hero's younger brother, who saw nothing before him but poverty, should the settlement of the estate on George Robert remain unchanged; a woman whom old Fitzgerald had taken from a life of lowest infamy and made his mistress; and a relative, Patrick Randal McDonnel by name, who was a low-lived attorney, profligate in his manners, and utterly unscrupulous in his profession—a pettifogger of the genuine old rascally stamp, and such a one—so given to violence and fraud, to impudent perversions of the law and to daring contempt of it when it suited his purpose—as was not then to be met with out of Ireland. He was, besides, the recognised leader of about the most truculent and lawless mob in the island—that of Castlebar.

These three exercised unlimited sway over old Fitzgerald, simply because they allowed the depraved appetites of the weak old semi-lunatic full swing. And they used their power in obtaining for themselves and their supporters, among whom were some of the leading men of the neighbourhood, the most valuable portions of the property on long leases and at nominal rents. The leases of course were illegal, but the accomplices stuck to the plunder as long as they could.

Digitized by Google

Our hero took the necessary legal proceedings to secure his rights. While these were in progress the old man, who was enormously in debt, was arrested and carried to a Dublin spunging-house. George Robert interposed at once and procured his father's release, by paying down 8,000*l.*, and rendering himself responsible for the rest of the old man's just debts. In return the latter ratified the original settlement. And shortly afterwards the Court of Chancery constituted George Robert custodian of the estate. However, by this time the old man was back again in the hands of the trio, and our hero had literally to fight his way into possession, storming the family mansion in the course of the business, and at the risk of his life. This was in 1778.

George Robert now set up for a model landlord, and did a great many wise and good things. But he set up also for a political and social reformer of the most advanced order; he declared against the oligarchy that ruled the country; he denounced alike the tyranny and greed of the landlords, the indolence of the tenants, the treatment of the very poor, the extravagance of everybody who had anything to spend, and the universal lawlessness; he settled a colony of thrifty and industrious Presbyterians from the north on his lands, and provided them with a clergyman and a meeting-house; and he interfered, when no other man of position dared to do so, in aiding the officers of the Crown to arrest a multitude of people in and about Castlebar, guilty of the then very common offences of obtaining the premiums offered by the Linen Board by fraud and perjury. Thus he set against him the great landowners, the squireens, the fanatical lower classes, and the dangerous rabble of his county-town. Every one of them regarded him as an interloper who was to be put down, no matter how.

But such was the dash, energy, and terrible reputation of Fighting Fitzgerald, and such his powerful connections, that not a man, far or near, dared to oppose him openly. The best among them cowered before him as though he had been their sovereign. And it must be allowed that he bore himself towards most of them—especially those whom he regarded as upstarts—with all the scorn and insolence of an Eastern despot, which only rendered the general hatred the more intense.

The only way in which his enemies could reach him was by inciting his brother, the mistress, and the pettifogger to annoy him in every way; and this was done to an extent perfectly inconceivable. Over and over, murderous ambuscades were laid for him, and over and over were the wild fighting squires of Galway urged against him; but he escaped the first, though not always unwounded, while his sword was invariably an overmatch for the swords of the second.

Tired out at last, he seized his father by force with the view of paralysing the trio. It was a lawless act, but hundreds worse were daily taking place around him; and considering the circumstances under which the deed was done, nobody really blamed him. In our own day the law would have assisted him in it; but there was little law to be

Digitized by Google

had in such cases twenty miles outside of Dublin in those days, and none at all in Mayo. So far as that sort of thing went, Cromwell's equivalent for Connaught* still held good. The deed was illegal, however, and that was all his enemies wanted.

A warrant was granted against him for kidnapping his own father, but the difficulty was to execute it. For Fitzgerald had erected and armed a formidable battery commanding the approaches to his house, and—this being the volunteer era of Ireland—had organised a military force among his tenantry, who, being mostly Presbyterians and strangers, hated of the natives, were devoted to his person.

He was arrested at last by surprise, in the grand-jury room of Castlebar, on the first day of the summer assizes of 1780, and tried instantly—the presiding judge being a member of one of the powerful county families. It is hard to square the proceedings that followed with modern ideas of what such things should be. George Robert was convicted and sentenced to pay a fine of 1,000*l.*, and to be imprisoned for three years—the latter portion of the sentence being intended to keep him from taking any part in the forthcoming general election of 1782.

Irish prison discipline was then very lax. Three days after his committal, our hero—who had the run of the gaol—walked up to the principal entrance, threw down a bag of guineas to be scrambled for by the warders, and walked quietly out while they were rolling in a heap on the floor. He remained at large for fifteen months, during which he kept his father tight in his clutches; hunted, gambled, and duelled to the top of his bent; and carried things in general with a high hand over everybody.

At length the general election drew nigh, and the Government, giving way to the pressure put upon it by the Mayo magnates, sent a strong military force against Torlough. There were three companies of foot, a troop of horse, and a battery of artillery under a field officer. It found the fort dismantled, and George Robert and his father gone. Three weeks later the latter turned up in Sligo and the former in Dublin. Our hero was arrested instantly, and kept in prison till the general election, when he was released at the intercession of his high-placed relatives.

The old man was now dead; but the trio, who had managed him so long, continued to pester George Robert still, being encouraged, of course, by the leading men of the county. His imprisonment had somewhat tamed our hero, who became a good deal more circumspect than of old, though still remaining quite sufficiently headlong. This emboldened the pettifogger. Among other courses, the latter took to bringing charges of attempting his life against Fitzgerald—four of them in as many months. They were all transparently false, and failed egregiously. Moreover, he instigated the mob of Castlebar to rob Fitzgerald, harry

* "Hell or Connaught."

Digitized by Google

his lands, maltreat his tenants, and take pot-shots at himself. In short, McDonnel got up a feud of the right old Irish fashion between the men of Torlough and the mob of the county-town which stood about four miles off.

At length the pettifogger and two of his accomplices, towards the close of 1785, had the audacity to kidnap one of Fitzgerald's servants and to hold him close prisoner in one of their houses for eighteen days, doing their best the while to bribe or intimidate the man into turning false witness against his master in support of one of McDonnel's murder charges.

The man escaped, and Fitzgerald lost no time in obtaining warrants for the arrest of the three, who went into hiding for several weeks. Their whereabouts being discovered at last, they were cleverly captured by a party from Torlough, early on the morning of February 24, 1786. Fitzgerald directed the prisoners to be marched to Castlebar, and the party started immediately.

On the way occurred a circumstance which Fitzgerald's enemies have succeeded in throwing into deep obscurity. A shot was fired at the escort, one of whom there is reason to believe was killed by it. Thereupon the Torlough men—fiery spirits all, who had little regard for human life, and who heartily detested two of their prisoners—turned upon these two, McDonnel being one, and slew them. They then retraced their steps to Torlough with the remaining prisoner. George Robert heard their story with amazement. Disregarding those about him, who entreated him to fly, he despatched a mounted messenger to Castlebar with the news, and sat down quietly to wait the result.

They soon came in the shape of a party of soldiers and a raging mob. The former took possession of George Robert, and left the mob to sack his house at their ease. This was done very effectually; plunder to the value of 30,000*l.* being carried off, nor was any inquiry ever made concerning it.

Our hero was lodged in his old quarters about noon that day. Two hours later a troop of assassins—connived at by the local authorities—entered the gaol and assailed the prisoner, whom they wounded in fifty places; nor did they depart until, as they thought, they had "done his business." Unfortunately for him, they were mistaken.

He was now completely in the hands of his enemies, and these, from the greatest to the smallest, took full advantage of his situation. Under pretence of preventing a recurrence of the outrage, he was confined so rigorously as to render the preparation of his defence really impossible. Meanwhile care was taken to suppress everything—men and facts—that told in his favour, and to twist the matter fatally against him.

The assizes came on at length, the presiding judge and the prosecuting counsel being his old enemies, Yelverton and Fitzgibbon, and the high sheriff an enemy more pronounced than either, the Honourable Denis Browne.

Digitized by Google

The ringleaders of the prison outrage in February were tried first, and though the case against them was proved to the hilt, they were every one acquitted.

Then George Robert was arraigned with two others. The theory of the prosecution was that the slaughter had been premeditated, and that a sham of rescue had been got up to give a colour to it; but not a particle of reliable evidence was produced in proof. On the contrary, much of the testimony was improbable, and the more material portions were contradicted by circumstances that could not lie. In short, there was nothing whatever to connect Fitzgerald with the deed. Still he was condemned, and *left for immediate execution*, as were his companions in misfortune.

At six in the evening, an hour after the hanging of the others, he was led to the hill of Castlebar, where a new gaol was in course of erection. A part of the scaffolding was utilised as a gallows. George Robert was dressed in a faded suit of the uniform of the Castlebar Hunt, his vest soiled and unbuttoned, his shoes and stockings coarse and dirty, and his hat bound with a hempen cord. A more striking contrast to his former elegance could not be conceived. His step, however, was firm, and his demeanour self-possessed and courageous.

The execution—greatly prolonged by bungling, which many thought intentional—was very cruel and trying to the doomed man. The first rope broke with his weight; and as nobody could be induced to supply another, they were obliged, after waiting about an hour, to use a rope from the building. This proved so long that Fitzgerald's feet touched the ground. And it was only when a storm of indignation from the spectators apprised the high sheriff, who stood by, that this vile work was being carried too far for even the mob of Castlebar to put up with it, that the rope was shortened and the tragedy brought to an end.

The dead body was transported at once to Torlough, and "waked" for a few hours in an out-house. At midnight it was borne to the grave, "dug on the wrong side of a ruined chapel, in a lonely part of the estate." Here it was buried without coffin in the dress described.

What right-minded people thought of the trial and execution may be gathered from the following remark made to the judge on his return to Dublin: "Come from doing Connaught justice, my lord! Yes, George Robert Fitzgerald was a murderer, and—*he was murdered.*"

Many years later his brother, Charles Lionel, made it a death-bed request that he should be buried in the grave of the celebrated duellist. When this was opened, the body of George Robert was found almost perfect, a fact which told strongly on the superstitious minds of the people, but which may be accounted for by the chemical properties of the soil. However, it is beyond dispute that not a single one of the ringleaders in the prison died a natural death.

Digitized by Google

New Lamps for Old Ones.

"The African Magician put his twelve new lamps into a basket, and went out with this on his arm to the neighbourhood of Aladdin's palace. Here he walked to and fro, crying, with a loud voice, 'Who will exchange old lamps for new ones?' At last the Princess Badroulboudour heard his voice, but as she could not distinguish what he said, she sent one of her slaves, who accordingly went forth from the palace to ascertain what was the reason of all the noise and bustle. 'O Princess!' replied the slave, 'who can possibly help laughing at seeing yonder fool with a basket of new lamps on his arm, which he offers to exchange for old ones?' The Princess, who was ignorant of the value of the lamp, and its importance both to Aladdin and to herself, consented to make the trial, and ordered a eunuch to go and get it exchanged."

The luckless Princess in the Arabian tale had an excuse for her neglect of her archæological treasure which modern Italy has not—its virtue had been kept hidden from her, while Italy knows that the powers of the slaves of her lamp have been the sources of most of the sympathy and all of the admiration she enjoys, with such improvement in her material and political prosperity as they may have led to. Badroulboudour would not more famously have deceived herself if she had supposed that her brand-new lamp would have restored Aladdin's fortunes, than would modern Italians in attributing to the work of their days any of the fascinations and attractions which make Italy the goal of so many pilgrimages, the chiefest of the beloved faces of the earth to the Artist, the Poet, or the Dreamer. When true reverence for the magic of her mighty masters died out, the sense of their own interest and the honour the inheritance reflects even on the latest generation of their descendants, should have taught them to respect the treasures which, once destroyed or defaced, neither time nor labour, vain regrets or vainer restoration, will ever bring us to knowledge of again. That hair's breadth nearer to the infinite beauty which makes the difference between the work of the supreme genius and that of his best follower, no restorer can ever measure, nor will he ever respect; and the nineteenth century sculptor does not exist who can follow with his chisel the fine lines of Phidias or the Pisani. Yet to-day, all over Italy, common stonecutters are chiseling away the traces of the hands of the greatest race of artists that the Christian era has seen, or duller daubers are burying under their leaden gloom the touch of the great prophets of colour and design, till we are tempted to cry out in bitterness of heart to those who sit on the councils, "Destroy if you will, but restore no more; complete

Digitized by Google

what Goth and Vandal, Hun and Saracen began—level the cathedral and burn the picture, but give us no more of these ghastly mockeries to which the name of the master is given, but in which no touch or shade of his remains; so that we may keep the glory of the artist alive without the fear of these empty simulacra coming to give the lie to all our ideals, and make Titian and Tintoret, Donatello and the Pisani, as mythical as Dædalus."

If I shall be accused of grossly exaggerating, if not fabricating, in what I have just said, I reply that unfortunately there is no exaggerating the insensibility of the powers that be in control of the monuments of the Italian cities. I will give one fact more eloquent than all my words. The Duomo of Florence, as we all know, is the central glory of Tuscan art. As architecture, there is nothing so worthy to be held sacred on Italian soil, and here Giotto and the Pisani, rivalling Donatello and Della Robbia, with their worthiest compeers, did their best to honour Florence and the Queen of their faith. The restorers are going over the whole of the exterior sculpture—mind you, the most perfect *architectural* sculpture in the world—with corrosive acids applied bountifully, and left to act as long as they will, and then the stone-cutters go over the whole carious surface and restore it to new bright marble—stone-cutters whom they over-pay, unless they are chiseling the pavement of the streets, at two shillings the day.

"But," I seem to hear an indignant host of art-lovers cry out, "are there then no Italians left in Italy—are there no men left in whom exists still the appreciation of what is inimitable and delectable in art, and whom the knowledge of the dishonour being done the greatest names of Italy can move to indignation and action to stop this infamy?" There are such men, and I doubt not that their souls are galled as are mine and yours, who question; but they are scattered all over Italy, without any union in their vexation, and in the quiet and patient way of an Italian who has long been accustomed to suffer wrong, each waits to know that others feel as he does. They are not in politics, and have no friends who are in the Bureau of Public Works; and the municipal councils are a numerous swarm—Gradgrinds and Dombeys, and such—and they have communal architects who are their friends and who must have work. And these architects are mere builders, who have no more sense of the value of those finer arts which lend themselves to glorify architecture than they have of the music of Anacreon's verse; they understand the strength of mortar, and how by it to pile stone on stone; few, if any of them would hesitate to undertake to pull down St. Mark's or Giotto's Campanile, and build a better structure in its place; while, as to the wall-surfaces which we are to see, they may be green or grey, full of fretting, or bare as a boulder in a brook—that they don't concern themselves about; while as to that fol-de-rol of design which Giotto charged his soul with on his Campanile, if the commune wanted any such puerilities, they would get them done at so much the square metre, or so much the day's work,

Digitized by Google

and never trouble Time to find them a master for it. As for the general public, they like things of new frosty marble like the ornaments on a wedding cake; and when the people who have in charge the renovation of Sta. Maria dei Fiori have finished and taken down their scaffoldings, baring the skinned and mutilated sculptures which were the pride of Giotto and Donatello, the people, I say, will clap their hands and think they see Our Lady of Flowers as good as new.

The journalists, who as a general thing control or express the little public opinion which exists in Italy, belong to the indifferent public or to the friends of the architects and communes, though *Fanfulla* has nobly distinguished itself in the matter of St. Mark's; while the *Opinione* of Rome and the *Nazione* of Florence have always had a reasonable place for pleas of good taste and reverence. There may be others, but as I do not see all the Italian journals, I am unable to say how far protest against such incredible barbarism as I have related of the works on the Duomo of Florence has a chance of being heard. I do know that some of the journals have replied to the recent protests against the restoration of St. Mark's with scurrilous abuse.

In any popular sense of respect for antiquity or care for artistic excellence in Italy there is no hope. It is a curious phenomenon, which we see most clearly shown in the history of Greece and Italy, but which is probably a universal law, that art like empire never returns to any seat it once has occupied. What the standard of popular taste was in Greece in the days of Pericles we have no means of conceiving; that of Florence in the days of Giotto, and Venice or those of the Bellini, must have been far above anything we know now, judging from the most infallible indication—costume; and we have a right to suppose, from what we see at Pompeii and other late Greek communities, that the artistic sense was a part of the popular endowment. But the modern Hellene has a negation of artistic sense so absolute, that even in comparison with the neighbouring Bulgarian and still undeveloped Albanian, it is crudity. In the land of Phidias the flame of art burnt out so utterly, that there is hardly a nation in the limits of civilisation, and certainly none of the energy of intellect of the modern Greek, so completely and universally devoid of the art element as it is; and next to it is the Italian of the nineteenth century, and especially him of Florence. Nobody would compare modern Athens with Florence; and yet in what is the work of the last fifty years the greater credit for what has been done is due to the Athenian. The Greek is very like the Yankee—plain, practical, and utilitarian in his doings, and vaporous and turgid in his sayings. The cities of both are clean, well-built, and without architectural pretensions as a general thing; the one seems conscious that practically genius has gone from him, and the other that it has not come yet; the occasional infractions of this seemingly self-imposed law are so many lessons for its observance. But in comparison with the Florentine, the Greek is æsthetic negation as compared with positive bad taste. All that is built in Athens since

Digitized by Google

1830 might have been built in any new city in the far west of America where building stone was plenty; but all that has been reared in Florence since 1700 could only have been built where taste had reached an extreme of corruption.

But in reference to the inheritance of artistic wealth which their respective epochs of great art have left them, the Greek is beyond comparison more wise. He makes no pretension to build new Parthenons, but he has the good taste not to clean his old one: the delicious tint of Time's toning on its Pentelicon does not offend his sense of fitness, and he has no envy to scrub it. The Theseium is less lovely in tint, and has evidently been stuccoed, as to its columns, but he makes no attempt to plaster and restore it; his little Byzantine churches stand yet, alike undesecrated by trades or architect; and every shapeless and irrecognisable fragment thrown up in the excavations is put away as the Arab puts a bit of unknown writing, in the fear that the name of some God may be inscribed on it. I used to think he carried reverence to ridicule; but when I lived in Florence, and other parts of Italy, I learned to wish that the Italian had learned a little of the ridiculous virtue.

The Florentine, who borrows importance as he walks through the streets where he knows Giotto and Dante walked, holding himself the first, if not best, educated in Europe, finds his old treasures (he has no new ones) out of fashion, and will refurbish them; he must have them as new as his last Paris hat, or the English harness with which he looms, illustrious, four-in-hand, in the Cascine. The enterprising municipalities (one can't help wondering into what deeper circle of the Inferno Dante would have crowded them, could he have conceived their Vandalism possible—syndic, councillors, architects and all) must forsooth make this old Florence of theirs a new city, and they have, with a vengeance, put new wine in an old bottle.

Men who have passed their lives in the study of art know best, perhaps alone know, the fine degrees that lie between the works of genius in its higher manifestations; how hard to distinguish between the work of the master and that of the pupil—Lionardo and Luini—Titian and certain of his pupils; it is sometimes painfully easy to see how all those fine degrees are abolished by the restorer and cleaner. He would be a bold man, even amongst the best living sculptors, who would attempt to re-chisel the surface of the Venus of Milo, or one of the fragments of the Parthenon. What should we say to one who proposed to do it with baths of acid, followed by scrapers and chisels in the hands of common workmen? Well, this is just what, to a greater or less degree, is going on in most of those Italian cities where there is any architecture of which sculpture is an important part; it is being made to look like new. I have seen the executioners' scaffold up in the Cathedral and Campanile of Pisa; have seen the exquisite little Capella della Spina—a bijou that should have been removed bodily to some museum—blocked round and beset with scaffolding for months, and maybe years—

Digitized by Google

I don't remember it free from them; have seen them at Venice, and saw them when I was last at Florence in their worst shape.

Now the Duomo of Florence is to the great central school of Tuscan art what the Parthenon was to the Attic—the result of the best artistic talent of the best time of its art. We have seen how the Greek treats the Parthenon—what the Italian of Venice bombarded it into—and we shall see how the Florentine treats his Parthenon, the temple of his immaculately-conceived Virgin. I, the denouncer, will not use my own words—they may seem hot and distempered; I will quote faithfully and without exaggeration a letter just written me by a friend of mine who has worked and studied on the Duomo, knows its value, and has had free access to the "works," and whose statements may be taken without a grain of salt. The staff which carried on these so-called restorations was composed, let me premise, of half a dozen common stonecutters, under the charge of a master mason:—

"They commenced their operations at the cornice, working downwards, and their method of procedure was this: To clean the surface of the carving, which could not be cleaned with sandstone as were the mouldings and panelings—they covered it with a strong acid, which so far ate away the surface of the marble as to leave it, when washed, perfectly white; after this, one of the men was set to tool over the work, to sharpen its lines, and make it look in form and feature as he thought it ought. Not only was the delicate carving of capital and crocket subjected to this most horrible treatment, but even the more delicately carved statuettes." [And let the reader remember that these are miniature statues, the largest of them scarcely two feet high, and of the very finest workmanship ever done in Tuscany.] "Not unfrequently did I find the men using these same statuettes as convenient pegs on which to hang their bags and coats. But this was not all. Working from above downwards, the pieces of marble that were knocked out, in falling, so damaged the unprotected work beneath, that on the capitals of one window I counted no less than ten breakages resulting merely from this carelessness on the part of the workmen." [This, my correspondent, in reply to my question, said he inferred from the perfect freshness of the fractures, and in some cases from the fragments lying near.] "Moreover, in renewing the separate pieces of marble which they wished to replace, they did more to diminish the stability of the whole marble veneer than ever they could do by most careful insertion of new blocks to strengthen it, for an old piece was removed not because it was liable to fall out—indeed, it was such a work to remove some, that they often had to hammer out a block piece by piece—but because it had some superficial flaw, so that it would not take such fair polish as they wished it to."

Now it must not be supposed that the ornament and statuary on the Duomo had been made carious, much less eaten away, by the weather. In general, the finest detail of the ornament is still as sharp as when it

Digitized by Google

was finished, and it is only toned by the exposure, and not a single figure is endangered by wear; but their tone don't please the fine sense of the Florentine municipal, who is in the state of the Yankee from Illinois who preferred Power's Greek Slave to the Venus de' Medici "because the marble was so good and white."

I think, on the whole, I was wrong in assigning the Athenian less æsthetic capacity than the Florentine; the latter must go to the bottom of the scale; for the Athenian, though he loves, and has, a *clean* city, never thought of cleaning an antique to make it look better.

If I have not already astonished my readers, I shall succeed in doing so when I tell them that this process of flaying the Duomo is to continue until the whole church is raw, and that in two or three months the door of the Pisani, perhaps the *chef d'œuvre* of the school in delicate and exquisite ornamentation, will be reached, and that from the main building they propose to go on to Giotto's Campanile.

Remonstrance has been useless, even at Rome; now that the work has been begun it must be completed, they say, which means that, having destroyed half the building so far as its finest art character is concerned, it must be entirely destroyed: having skinned the half to the white marble, they must give it the final unity of complete desecration. Let us at least hope that no friend of art will subscribe another penny to the fund for completing the Duomo till this barbarism is suppressed once for all, and the flaying scaffold taken down. A few years will restore the tone to the flayed portion: an eternity of Italian taste will never restore what the Duomo is losing.

When, therefore, the Italian journals, enraged at the foreign interference with their desecration of the most precious heritage of the middle and subsequent ages, tell us that knowledge and taste are not limited to England or unknown in Italy, we have only to point to the Duomo being flayed without a remark or remonstrance from the whole of Italy; to the Cathedral and Campanile and Spina of Pisa; the choir of St. Francis at Assisi, barbarously torn out to be replaced by modern Italian carpenter's work; or the cathedral of Perugia, with its new *café* interior, and its superb stained glass of the fourteenth century taken down to be restored by nineteenth century glass-painters—all unnoticed by the journalism so vigilant in resentment; we have only to point to the modern Italian sculpture, so petty, so trivial, so essentially vulgar in its contrast with the dignified and simple work on the front of almost any of their churches (when unrestored), to show the Italians themselves that, with all their cleverness (and certainly modern Italian sculpture is exceedingly clever in its own way, and original enough), there is no class of workmen amongst them who show the least appreciation of what is most precious in the fourteenth and fifteenth century art. The firm conviction in every branch of art is that the work of to-day is better than, and may fitly replace, the work done five hundred years ago, and that better men than the Pisani, Donatello, or Giotto, are as common as studios in Florence.

Digitized by Google

That neither taste nor artistic talent abounds in any modern country at all comparable to that of the fourteenth century in Florence, or in Venice at the date of the building of St. Mark's, I am perfectly aware; nor do I believe that Englishmen, Germans, or even Frenchmen, any more than Italians, are equal to the reconstruction of the menaced façade of the great church of Venice. I am willing even to admit that Italians are as capable as any moderns: but that is not enough. What the world wants is not reconstruction but preservation, because no moderns can possibly work so completely in the spirit of the time in which that church was built that their work shall not completely falsify the reconstructed ideal. There are undoubtedly men of taste and erudition in Italy as well as elsewhere, and they have not failed to cry out against the taste shown in the previous restoration of St. Mark's. The journals have not all been dumb on this topic either; but it seems that all the outcry has resulted in nothing, for the work goes on. If there are better men in Venice, why were they not put to work before the vast areas of inimitable and irreplaceable old mosaics already destroyed were hammered down? What boots it to tell us of Italian taste when we see such fruit of it? It is not in their municipal councils as in their communal architects. The taste that desires to see the Duomo of Florence whitened like a new tombstone, is on a par with the reverence which would remove every trace of the ancient sculptor's hand to make it white, and these leave no room for discussion.

But another journal cries out in its wrath, "Shall we not do what we like with our own?" To say that the Italian Government has not legally and potentially the faculty of pulling down every old church in Italy would be absurd: it may pitch St. Mark's into the lagoons if it will, as it may close every museum and gallery to the stranger who comes here; but the inevitable result would be that the stranger would come no longer; and *morally*, it has no more right to destroy St. Mark's, or injure it, than the Greeks would have to sweep away the remains of the Parthenon, to build a new town-hall: and no Italian would admit them that.

That something must be done at no distant time to preserve the integrity of the façade of St. Mark's is very true; but what is needed is not what has been done hitherto. Any grave injury is still far off, and all repairing up to this must have been irreparable damage. The Italian Government has doubtless the means and sources of information necessary to avert all danger: what it owes the civilised world is to employ those means, and prevent the curing of one evil by the perpetration of a greater one. The appliances of modern engineering science are equal to the raising of St. Mark's bodily, and building new foundations under it, if necessary: compared to which all that needs to be done to secure stability of the menaced piers is a trifle.

But the Italian Government should go further, and assume the protection of all the buildings of artistic interest, as against the

Digitized by Google

ignorance and barbarism of municipal councils and jobbing architects. All over Italy are scattered monuments of greater or less importance committed to the discretion of bodies of men whose powers, the delegation of popular suffrage, are at present the arbiter of the destiny and duration of remains whose relative importance no one in any connection with the municipality is competent to determine, and through whose whims, or ambition to do something to give occupation to the unemployed, we may owe the destruction any day of what neither time nor money can replace. If there be, as I doubt not there is, a competent archæological authority in Italy, let it be put in charge of the public monuments, with such power that no demolition or restoration shall take place without its knowledge and consent. The outside world does not ask the right of intervention, but that Italy should do what reverence for her own past would dictate without the need of foreign suggestion. The whole of Italy is a book full of important records for archæology and mediæval history, not half of whose pages are yet read satisfactorily; the interest of Italians, even more than of Englishmen, would seem to be to provide that by no act of ignorance or barbarism should one of those pages be defaced. If Italians find in the expression of this desire, or the outcry which the almost daily sacrilege committed by the municipalities has called out, any derogation to their dignity as citizens of a free state, they must have singular ideas of their relations with the rest of the world. If they continue in the tone of angry defiance of all remonstrance from without, which is (with, as I have said, some important and honourable exceptions in the press and personality of the kingdom) the general reply to the feeling expressed with reference to St. Mark's, they may have no worse result than that all lovers of art or history may pray that the Austrians may come back again. But if, in defiance of everything, they go on with the course of destruction which has marked the few past years, there is one consequence they may look forward to with certainty—that all foreigners of taste will henceforward and for ever forego their pilgrimages to the no longer sacred places of Italy. If Italians are wise, they will not kill the only fowl of the golden-egg age left them.

On the other side, something might be said of the *mutual* obligations of Italy and civilisation. If the right preservation of the monuments of Italy is so important to all lovers of art, let them also do something to aid in this right preservation, not by taking, or attempting to take, the the work out of Italian hands, but contributing from that wealth which is much more abundant in England than in Italy, something to have it properly done under the care of those Italians who may be found competent. Here may be a practical work for the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments.

Digitized by Google

Mademoiselle de Mersac.

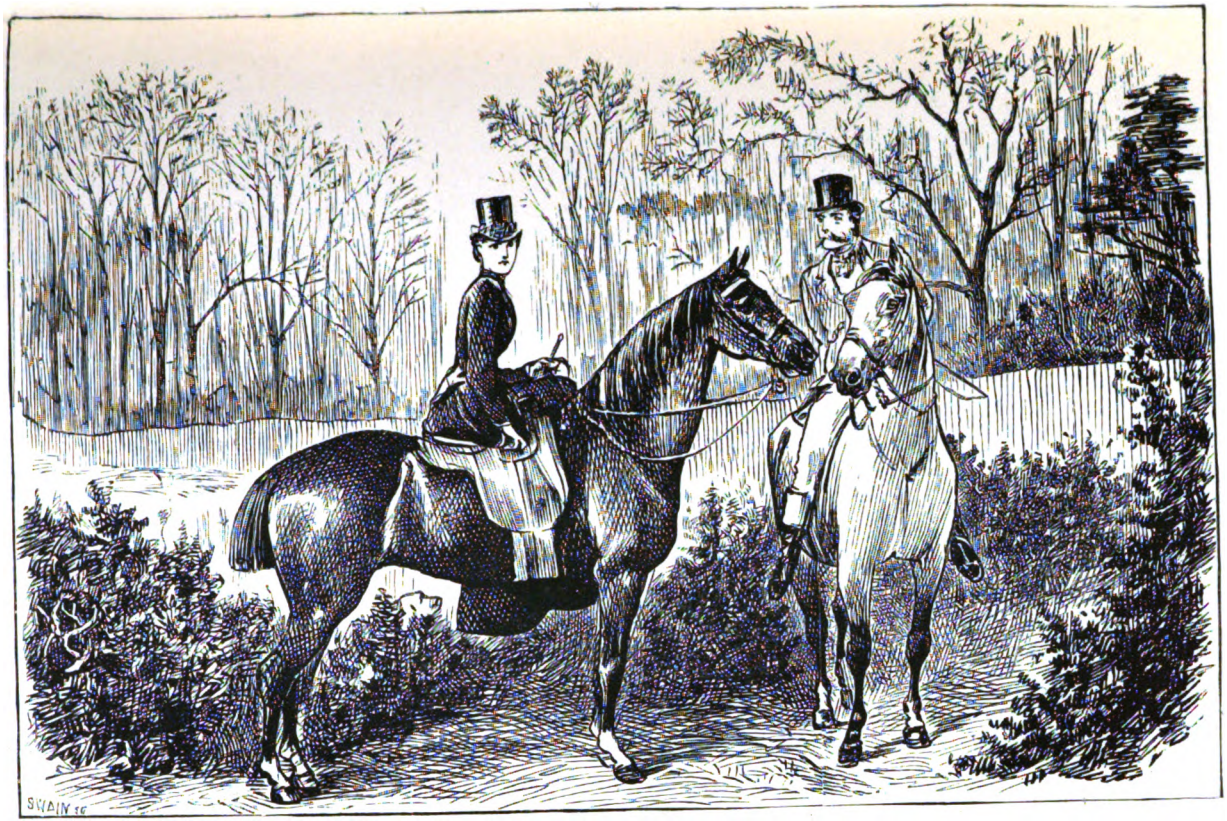
CHAPTER XXXI.

Jeanne is shown the Scenery of Surrey.

IF everyone were compelled, by some irresistible force, to state what had been the happiest period of his or her life, what odd, pathetic revelations would be made, and what unlooked-for confirmation certain threadbare truisms would receive! For, in deed, what all say, and few believe, is, after all, the truth—that happiness is no more to be commanded than success; that neither health, wealth, rank, nor glory can bestow it; and that he who sets it before himself as his chief object in life is absolutely certain to miss his end.

Now it came to pass that, in the month of December 1870, our heroine, in whose character selfishness was assuredly no prominent trait, was blessed with two weeks during which all things seemed to go well with her. It is true that what cause she had had for trouble and anxiety remained to her still, for did not every hour bring her nearer to the time when Saint-Luc should come riding back from the wars to claim his bride? And was not Léon, in these same wintry days, campaigning in the chill Loiret country, at the mercy of wind and weather, and of any stray German bullet. But just then Jeanne was enabled to set aside these dismal thoughts and forebodings; and if anyone thinks that such capacity showed any want of feeling on her part, it is clear that that person was never in love, and can, therefore, be no fit judge of her case.

Digitized by Google



JEANNE IS SHOWN THE SCENERY OF SURREY.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

The chestnut mare, having been duly tried and found tractable, was sent up to the Holmhurst stables for Mademoiselle de Mersac's temporary use. Jeanne demurred at first to this arrangement, but gave way when Mr. Ashley, whose heart had been completely won by the skill of this beautiful young horse-breaker, swore that, unless she did so, he would buy the mare himself of Barrington, and offer her to his niece as a Christmas present. Mrs. Ashley, good, imprudent soul, aided and abetted.

"By all means use the horse, my dear child," said she. "My girls would in a moment, only unfortunately they have no nerve; and Mr. Barrington has more horses and more money than he knows what to do with; and a good gallop will bring the roses into your cheeks, which, I'm sure, they want—not that your complexion isn't lovely, but just a tinge of colour, you know, is an improvement to everybody. And as to hunting, I can't see myself any reason why you shouldn't, except that gentlemen never do *really* like ladies in the hunting-field, whatever they may say; but at any rate you might ride to the meet, and Simpson could bring you home, if you didn't mind; and really it would be the greatest comfort to us all to think that there was some amusement for you here, unless, of course, M. de Saint-Luc had any objection to your riding."

"I do not consult M. de Saint-Luc about such things," said Jeanne, with much dignity. And so the matter was settled.

About this time two phenomena began to be a good deal commented upon by the subscribers to the Surrey Hunt. One of these was the frequent appearance at the meets of a beautiful Frenchwoman—a niece of old Ashley, of Holmhurst, people said—who sat her horse like an Amazon, but never followed the hounds; and the other was the curiously unsportsmanlike conduct of the master of Broadridge. Barrington, whose boast it had ever been that he did nothing by halves, had earned and sustained a good reputation in the hunting-field. Admirably mounted—as a bachelor of his means could well afford to be—riding at once judiciously and boldly, and knowing every inch of the country, it had hitherto been a tolerable certainty that, so long as the hounds were out, he would be with them. But now he seemed to have determined that under no circumstances would he see the end of a run. He seldom missed a meet, it is true; but, whatever may have been the object of his attendance, it was apparently not to pursue the fox that he went out. If perchance a cover were drawn blank, that was quite enough for him; and often he would not even wait long enough to make sure of such a disappointment, but, after a brief interval of impatient fidgeting, would remark to anyone who happened to be near that this kind of thing really wasn't good enough, you know, and that he was going home. Nay, more than once, after getting off well, he was thrown out in the most unaccountable manner, and disappeared, no one knew whither.

Jeanne could have told them what became of the renegade sportsman

Digitized by Google

on these occasions; and so, for that matter, could Simpson, had he been garrulously given. But Simpson was getting into years, and had learnt to hold his tongue, and, according to his own words, to "keep hisself *to* hisself."

Simpson, however, knew all about it. He knew perfectly well, as he shogged slowly along the miry lanes astride one of the carriage-horses, who would presently come thundering up from behind him, or pop over a hedge at his side, and say, with the utmost consideration, "Oh, Simpson, hadn't you better be pushing on towards home? Mrs. Ashley will be wanting you this afternoon, you know, and I will see that the young lady gets back all right. Oh, and Simpson, here's——" And then this corrupt old groom would stretch out his right hand for a moment, withdraw it again, raise it to his hat, with a brisk "Thank ye, sir," and touch his horse with the spur.

He did not chatter about these things when he got back to the stables. He was not the man to judge his betters, or to jump to hasty conclusions because Mr. Barrington and Mamzell chose to ride about the country together for a couple of hours or more, instead of returning direct to Holmhurst. For aught he knew, such ways of going on might be customary in France. And, in the meantime, he was a married man, with a young family, and half-sovereigns were half-sovereigns.

Long afterwards, when Barrington, in confidential intercourse, used to allude to these protracted rides, he was wont to declare that not once, in the course of any of them, had a word passed between him and Mademoiselle de Mersac which might not have been safely uttered in the presence of a third person. Indeed, Jeanne would not, at this time, have permitted her companion to address her as he had once done, in the days of her freedom, in Algiers. But words, which are at best but a poor and inadequate means of expressing thought, may be replaced, as everybody knows, in many effectual ways; and probably those brief December days brought to our two friends as perfect a mutual understanding as they were likely ever to arrive at in this world.

They did not trouble the high road much. Sometimes they rode through winding byways and drowsy little villages; sometimes past farm-houses, where the sound of approaching hoofs set the dogs barking and frightened the ducks and geese from their stagnant pool; sometimes across a ploughed field or a stretch of pasture land. But most of all they liked to breast the steep sides of the chalk hills, and, after a short breathing-space upon the summit, to gallop over the free and rolling downs. Barrington, in his double capacity of an Englishman and a native of Surrey, was very properly anxious to point out the beauties of the wintry landscape to one who otherwise might possibly have failed to appreciate them. The ever-varying nature of the prospect was what he chiefly insisted upon. The attractiveness of scenery, he said, was, after all, almost entirely a question of atmosphere. It was not mere outline, however exquisite, that could satisfy the eye, but light and shade, or, to speak more

Digitized by Google

correctly, gradations of colour; and the more these shifted and changed, the greater must be the charm of the natural picture; so that, although Surrey had not the grandeur of Algeria, and the English sun was but a poor imitation of the African, yet the wild, rainy winter of these northern latitudes could produce effects unknown in brighter climes; and whether a blustering sou'-wester swept the bare downs under a low, grey sky, or whether there were a touch of frost in the air, and the blue smoke rose straight above the distant homesteads, or whether all the view were softened by a pearly mist, through which pale rays of sunlight struggled here and there, still there was always something in the aspect of this pastoral country to stir the artist's heart, and, almost every day, something fresh.

Barrington discoursed at considerable length in this strain, and said many foolish and affected things, and, every now and then, a true one. If it had pleased him to enlarge upon the origin of species or the meaning of existence, the effect produced upon the mind of his auditor would have been very nearly the same. It was not so much what Barrington said as the sound of his voice that she loved to listen to; and doubtless he might have uttered ten times the number of absurdities that he did without any risk of her thinking him less witty and wise. Jeanne was at this time as nearly happy as it was possible for her to be. She was constantly alone with the man whom she loved; and that was enough for her. Whether he loved her was a question which she had not put to herself since the renewal of her intimacy with him—or, at all events, had not consciously put. Neither had her thoughts reverted to the dream she had once cherished of passing the remainder of her life with him. Her destiny was to marry M. de Saint-Luc, while his might very likely lead him into a union with Helen Ashley, a person entirely unworthy of him. But what was the use of dwelling upon the dark future? Jeanne rejoiced in the present, and troubled herself very little, it is to be feared, about its ultimate issues, whether as regarded herself or others. That she ought to have so troubled herself is not to be denied; but her biographer would humbly submit that he has not intended to represent Mademoiselle de Mersac as a type of feminine perfection.

As for Barrington, his character must indeed have been imperfectly indicated if it be not at once perceived what influence this sort of quasi-friendly intercourse was likely to have upon him. So long as the surface of life was made smooth and easy for this philosopher, he was not the man to search for any germs of possible sorrow that might lie beneath it. He was deeply in love with Jeanne; he luxuriated in the hints and insinuations of his love which opportunity enabled him to indulge in; he had just enough doubt as to her sentiments with regard to him to add zest to his philandering; and as for that determination of making her his wife which he had announced so firmly to his friend Leigh, that might conveniently be put upon the shelf for a season.

And if some extenuation be required for the thoughtless conduct of

Digitized by Google

these two persons, it may perhaps be found in the fact that those about them threw no sort of obstacle in their path. A matter had to be thrust very close under Mrs. Ashley's nose before she would become aware of it; Mr. Ashley had long since made up his mind, in a dull, vague way, that Barrington was eventually to marry his eldest daughter, and had no fears upon the score of this French niece, who was already engaged to some foreigner or other; and Miss Barrington, who alone saw whither the course of events was tending, had reasons of her own for not choosing to interfere with it. Even Helen, though she was a trifle dissatisfied and jealous, felt no serious alarm; for she had that curiously infatuated belief in the power of her own charms which would appear to be the especial property of fair-haired, lymphatic women.

So it was that Barrington was allowed to ride about the country with Jeanne all day, and to spend nearly every evening at Holmhurst, without let or hindrance.

Now there lived in the neighbourhood a certain big personage, whose name is of no importance to our story, but who, in the lack of a better pseudonym, may be called the Marquis of Carabas; and this nobleman, residing but little upon his Surrey estates, yet anxious, for political and other reasons, to keep on good terms with the landed gentry of the county, great and small, was accustomed, in the month of December, every year, to give a ball, to which, with a large-hearted hospitality, it was his rule to invite the whole of them. To Helen and Blanche Ashley this annual festivity was as important an event as the Derby is to some people and Easter Monday to others. By ancient and prescriptive right, they each received a present of a ball-dress from their father as the time for the event drew near. They talked of it for weeks beforehand, and wondered who would be there with as much eagerness as if there had been the slightest doubt as to the number and names of the guests whom they were to meet. And now nothing would satisfy them but that Jeanne must see to what a pitch of elegance and luxury the Surrey entertainments were capable of reaching.

"You needn't hesitate on account of its making an extra lady," Blanche urged; "because there is always such a crowd that one more or less cannot possibly make any difference; and Lady Carabas is so good-natured and kind. Mamma met her in Westerham the other day, and she said we were to be sure to bring anybody who might be staying in the house. Do come."

"Come!" cried Mrs. Ashley. "Of course she will come. Why should she not? If it is about your being in mourning that you are thinking, my dear, that is of no consequence at all; it is not the custom in England for people to shut themselves up on that account. There were two girls who lived in this neighbourhood—I can't recollect their name just now, but everybody knew them—and their father fell downstairs one evening and broke his neck—such a shocking thing! I always think it is so dreadful for people to meet their death in that kind

Digitized by Google

of ridiculous manner, because one can't help laughing a little at it, and yet it is quite as bad for them and their relations, you know, as if they had died in their beds, in the ordinary way—not but what it was just as well in this particular case, for I believe the poor man drank terribly, and they said he used to beat his wife. Well, I remember perfectly that, about six weeks, or perhaps it may have been two months afterwards, a charity ball was given at Reigate, and there were those girls, smothered in black crape, but in low dresses—striking, still very becoming to them, I must say, for they had clear white skins, something like yours, my dear; and they made quite a sensation, and a great many people were scandalised, and one of them married an enormously rich man—a timber merchant, or something—immediately afterwards. It *was* a little soon certainly—the ball I mean, not the marriage—but I mention it just to show you that you need not feel any scruple."

Jeanne explained that, if she declined to be present at the Marchioness of Carabas's ball, it would not be owing to any apprehension of the kind suggested.

"Then you really must come," said Blanche. And Barrington, who happened to be present, took occasion to add that the whole county would consider itself slighted if Mademoiselle de Mersac refused to countenance its small attempts at gaiety.

"That is very great nonsense," returned Jeanne, all her old dislike for laboured compliments aroused by this absurd assertion. "I know no one in the county, and no one can miss me if I stay away; but if my friends in Algiers heard that I had gone to a ball at such a time as this, when all our country is in mourning, they would be very angry. And they would be quite right to be angry."

In truth, things were not looking hopeful for France in those dark December days. The army of the Loire, under General Chanzy, slowly retreating; Ducrot forced back into Paris, neither dead nor victorious; the Government removed to Bordeaux, and King William fitting on his Imperial crown in the palace of Louis XIV.—how could any Frenchwoman be expected to dance in the midst of such troubles?

"I will stay at home with Miss Barrington, and you shall tell me all about the ball the next morning," said Jeanne. And Miss Barrington nodded her head approvingly.

"You and Mademoiselle de Mersac will be rather dull all by yourselves, Aunt Susan," remarked Barrington. "I've a great mind to cut the ball myself, and to come in and spend the evening with you."

"You will do nothing of the sort," returned his aunt, somewhat sharply. "The county really would think itself slighted by your absence—or, at any rate, you believe it would; and you are much too considerate to inflict unnecessary pain upon others. Besides which, you would only interrupt our chat and be in the way here."

"Thank you very much. I always take it as a compliment when people tell me they don't want me. It isn't the sort of thing that

Digitized by Google

one could say to most men, don't you see, without being misunderstood."

"You have that happy self-conceit, Harry," replied Miss Barrington, "that I believe you would discover some subtle form of flattery in being called a fool. But you certainly do not misunderstand me in the present instance. When I tell you that your room will be preferred to your company on the 18th, I mean what I say."

And so she did. It was her rule to state her wishes in plain terms. She wished, just then, to have a few words with Jeanne; and she knew that this end could hardly be attained so long as her nephew was in the room. When the evening of the ball came, and when, after some delay in the completion of the young ladies' toilettes and a good deal of fidgeting and grumbling on the part of Mr. Ashley, the whole party had at last driven away, she drew a long breath of satisfaction, and pulling her arm-chair up to the fireside, motioned to Jeanne to do likewise.

"Now," said she, "we can talk in peace. Tell me, what do you think of these good people?"

Jeanne was by this time quite accustomed to the old lady's abrupt and rather indiscreet questions. She laughed, and said that everybody in the house had been very kind to her.

"Oh, yes, they are very kind in their way. I don't want to eat their salt, and then speak against them behind their backs, you know. But it is quite possible to be kind, amiable, tolerably well-educated, and hospitable, and at the same time to be a great bore; and I confess that these dear Ashleys bore me. On the other hand, I am such a bore to them that you may be sure they would not have pressed me to stay six weeks in their house if they had not expected to profit by it, sooner or later. Do you know how many god-children I have?"

Jeanne said "No."

"Six-and-twenty—no less than that. They are all of tender years. I never was asked to stand sponsor to a single infant till I was past middle age, and independent, and likely to remain so. Odd, isn't it? Now do you think—I ask you as a friend, you know, and an impartial judge—*do* you think that Helen would make a suitable wife for Harry?"

Jeanne was not likely to be disconcerted by thrusts of this nature. "I suppose," said she, "that Mr. Barrington will choose his wife for himself."

"Not he! You don't know him, or you would not say that. Two months ago I could have got him to engage himself to Helen Ashley with the greatest ease in the world. In point of fact, I very nearly did it. But one changes one's views very often—at least, I do, I am sorry to say—and now I begin to think that, after all, Helen would hardly do. I regret it, because there certainly was a sort of tacit understanding between me and the Ashleys that the match should be made; but there! —the world is full of disappointments, and they must take their share

Digitized by Google

like the rest of us. I shall give Helen a couple of dresses and a fifty-pound note, and put her down for a trifle more in my will. I think that will be behaving handsomely. The only difficulty is to find a substitute for her."

"But is it necessary that Mr. Barrington should marry at all?" asked Jeanne, rather amused at the off-hand way in which her friend's future was being mapped out for him.

"That is not the question. He is quite sure to marry, and that before he is much older too. And I think he has taken up a mistaken notion of the whole subject, as men often do. And the truth is, I am fond of Harry—he has been something more than a nephew to me—and I don't want him to make his life miserable by a stupid error."

Jeanne said nothing, but wondered inwardly what might be the mistaken notion that Mr. Barrington had adopted.

"Marriages," resumed Miss Barrington, after a long pause, "are mostly mistakes. I dare say you may think that, as an old maid, I am not very competent to judge; but lookers-on see most of the game, and I know what a mess a great many of my friends have made of it. Sometimes I think that they manage these things better in Chicago, though no doubt that system also has its disadvantages. Anyhow, in this country, a husband and wife can't dissolve their partnership because they don't happen to agree; and, do you know, the longer I live, the more I become convinced that there can be no real happiness in married life without love. That is an old-fashioned idea, I am aware; but I make bold to maintain the truth of it, all the same, and in the face of the fact that a great many men, and nearly all women, think differently—at all events, *before* marriage."

"We think differently in France," Jeanne observed.

"Yes; and look at the result! Not, of course, that you can know anything about that. You *will* know though, one of these days, if you don't mind what you are about. Now don't look offended, my dear girl, because I am a blunt old woman, and I shall say what I please, when I think it is for your good. Take my word for it, you had better get rid of M. de Saint-Luc while you can. Harry has told me all about him."

"I would rather discuss Mr. Barrington's marriage than my own," said Jeanne.

"I don't see any reason why we should not discuss both; but no matter—yours can stand over for the present. I want to find Harry a wife whom he can love, who will love him in return, and who will have enough tact and self-respect to prevent him from tiring of her in six months. If you should ever come across such a person, it would be a friendly act on your part to beg her to put herself in communication with me. I am going away the day after to-morrow."

"So soon!" ejaculated Jeanne, her breath rather taken away by the suddenness with which this intended move was announced.

"Yes. I have had enough, and more than enough, of Holmhurst for

Digitized by Google

the present; and really it is time for me to visit another of my twenty-six god-children. After the new year, I shall go to my own house in London; and then I want you to come and stay with me. Will you come?"

"I should like it very much," answered Jeanne, rather hesitatingly—"that is, if my uncle and aunt have no objection."

"Good gracious me! what objection could they have? I should like to hear them object to anything that I proposed! You need not be afraid of finding London dull. I see a good many people of one kind and another, and you will not be left very much alone with me. I shouldn't wonder if Harry were to come up to town in January. I know he means to leave this before Christmas. Well, then, that is all settled. And now I am going off to bed."

Miss Barrington accordingly collected her work, her spectacles, the book that she was reading, and her other belongings, and departed. But Jeanne sat staring into the fire, thinking, wondering, and doubting within herself, until at length the revellers returned from their ball, the elders yawning, but the young people still excited and voluble.

Helen was in the best of tempers and spirits. She had, it appeared, achieved a signal success. Her card had been filled up within five minutes of her entrance into the ball-room; old Lord Carabas had trotted up to her, and complimented her upon her blooming complexion. "Rather impertinent of him, wasn't it? But I suppose one ought not to mind that kind of thing from an old gentleman," said the pleased Helen. Mr. Barrington had made himself especially agreeable, and she had danced with him three times—oh, no, not five times, Blanche—certainly not—well, perhaps it might have been four. And so forth, and so forth.

The retrospect lasted a good half-hour; and at the end of it, Jeanne, seeking the solitude of her own room, sat down to think over the events of the evening, and to wonder what the end of all this would be. For her, if for no one else, she was beginning to perceive that there was every appearance, at present, of troubles ahead.

CHAPTER XXXII.

In which Barrington does a great deal of Talking.

Miss Barrington proved as good as her word. Two days after the ball she bade a cordial farewell to her friends at Holmhurst, and drove away from the door, her prim, elderly maid facing her on the back seat of the carriage, and her neat luggage following in a cart, under the charge of two servants. The number of hitherto invisible retainers who started up to render Miss Barrington some small service, on the last day of her sojourn in any country-house, was something astonishing; but she did not object to the practice, and, indeed, had done something to encourage

Digitized by Google

it, holding, as she did, that one of the few unmixed delights that accrue to the possessor of a full purse is that of indiscriminate tipping.

The Ashleys, one and all, bemoaned her departure loudly; and a perceptible gloom fell upon the household after she had gone. But was this owing solely to grief over the loss of their guest, or had her casual remark that she expected Mademoiselle de Mersac to pay her a visit, early in the ensuing month, anything to do with it? It is a fact that Helen had been given to suppose that she, and not her cousin, was to have been thus favoured; and if this unexpected change of programme produced some feeling of soreness and disappointment in her breast, and a little anxiety in that of her parents, who can blame them?

It must, at all events, be recorded to their credit that they vented none of the ill-humour they may have felt upon Jeanne, but were only a trifle silent and dispirited during the remainder of the day. Miss Barrington, as they all knew, was a capricious old person, liable to all kinds of passing fancies, which those who valued her friendship must needs put up with. It was certainly not a little vexatious that she should have chosen to defraud Helen of her visit to London, but that she might be contemplating the far more serious injury of robbing her of her potential husband was a notion that had not as yet suggested itself to any one of them.

And to Helen, at any rate, joy came in the morning. For upon her plate at breakfast-time she found a very kind note from her god-mother, enclosing a cheque for fifty pounds, and at the same time requesting her to order for herself, by way of a Christmas present, two dresses, with regard to the materials and trimmings of which no restriction was laid upon her. The same post brought a little pile of foreign letters to Jeanne, two of which were evidently from M. de Fontvieille and from her brother's bailiff respectively.

Pierre Cauvin's composition was in the highest degree creditable to him. The style of it was ornate, the orthography ingenious if somewhat peculiar, and the absence of erasures testified that the whole production was probably the result of more than one rough copy. He began by offering humble thanks to Providence for his continued preservation in good health, and likewise for that of all his subordinates, whom he made it a point to mention severally, so that the first page of his letter, with its long string of harshly-sounding Arab names, read not unlike one of the genealogical chapters of the New Testament. This duty accomplished, he went on to express a respectful hope that mademoiselle had not suffered from the effects of the bleak climate of the north. He had taken some pains, he said, since mademoiselle's departure, to discover whether the English winter were as formidable as it had been represented, and had gained a little reassuring information from the captain of a yacht which had lately come into harbour. "He is a native of Cahousse, in the island of Ouaïte," wrote Pierre, "which, according to him, is one of the British Isles, though I have not been able to discover

Digitized by Google

it upon the map. He tells me that in his part of the country snow and frost are seldom seen, but I have remarked that the stories of sailors should be received with caution. This one would have me believe, for instance, that, during the summer months, there are often as many as a hundred yachts such as his master's—a vessel, mademoiselle, fitted up with inconceivable luxury—lying off the little town where he lives, and that this is but a small fraction of the number of pleasure-ships that carry the English flag. I answer him nothing; but mademoiselle is aware that an Auvergnat is not the man to let himself be taken in by an Englishman. I ask pardon of mademoiselle if I seem to speak disrespectfully of the nation to which madame her honoured mother belonged; but the truth is that *Messieurs les Anglais ne sont pas malins*"—(the phrase is hardly to be translated satisfactorily). "We have but few of them here, this winter, owing to the war; and the shopkeepers and landlords complain much of their absence. The country, mademoiselle, continues to rejoice in a profound tranquillity. The Arabs have not moved as yet; but one must not trust too much to them. The autumn rains have answered to our utmost hopes"—&c. &c. &c. At this point Pierre entered upon agricultural topics, and fell into a more vernacular strain of language.

M. de Fontvieille wrote somewhat despondently. He was very lonely, he said, very dull, and old age was gaining upon him every day. He had no longer the slightest hope of any successful termination to the war, and foresaw yet worse troubles looming on the horizon. Why he had been destined to live on into these bad times, after nearly all his contemporaries had been removed, was more than he could understand; and he should pray for the end, were it not that he longed to embrace his beloved children once more. He cheered up a little, however, on the last page, and related, with manifest glee, how he had purchased a magnificent pearl necklace from a distressed Moor, and with what crafty devices he had managed to get the better of that needy unbeliever.

And now Jeanne had to open her third letter, which she had reserved for the last, not upon the schoolboy's principle of pudding first and plums afterwards, but rather because she had feared that, had she read this letter before the others, the remembrance of it would probably have entirely marred her enjoyment of them, for she had seen at once that it was from M. de Saint-Luc.

After all, it proved to be only a friendly, but formal reply to one which, in a fit of compunction, she had addressed to him soon after her arrival in England. It opened with "Dear Mademoiselle," and closed with an assurance of the writer's respectful homage; it contained little information of a personal kind, except the modest mention of a slight wound, already nearly healed, and a pardonable self-congratulation upon the conduct of the regiment, which was now serving under General Bourbaki; it dwelt at some length upon the gallantry and cheerful endurance displayed by Léon; it touched briefly upon the prospects of

Digitized by Google

the campaign; and was, in short, as unlike the missive of a lover to his affianced bride as anything could well be. Nothing could have been more discreet, nothing less calculated to ruffle the susceptibilities of the lady to whom it was addressed; yet, in spite of its matter-of-fact tone—perhaps in consequence of it—it caused Jeanne to feel some sharp twinges of conscience.

It was not because her whole heart belonged to Barrington that she reproached herself: she had been quite clear in her mind, from the first, that nothing in the nature of love was due from her to M. de Saint-Luc. Nor did she deem herself much to blame in that she had left her future husband for so long without any direct news of her or inquiry after his safety. But what troubled her was an uneasy feeling that this man, whom she had always despised, was treating her with a generosity which she had certainly not deserved at his hands. Hitherto she had looked forward to her marriage simply and solely with reference to its bearing upon Léon's fortunes and her own. Of M. de Saint-Luc she had thought as little as a patient for whom leeches have been prescribed is apt to think of the suffering in store for those loathsome creatures, who, however, have obviously not altogether the best of it in the unpleasant business. To her he had been only a means—and a most distasteful means—towards an end. But now she began to wonder whether, after all, it were worthy of her, or even just, to regard him in this light. M. de Fontvieille and the Curé of El Biar had both given her to understand—though not, perhaps, in so many words—that it was permissible to marry one man and to love another; but when they had thus soothed her scruples, that other had been many hundred miles away, which certainly made a difference. Neither of them would have been likely to sanction those long rides of which mention has been made; even less would they have approved of the dialogues between their protégée and the Englishman, in which so little of importance was said, and so much inferred. The truth was that Jeanne had, for some time, been unconsciously stifling a conviction that out of all this some issue must come; that she would scarcely be able to part from Barrington without some sort of mutual avowal; and Saint-Luc's letter was but as a flash of additional light thrown suddenly upon the point from which she had, until now, sedulously averted her eyes. Not that she actually faced it even yet. She did not say to herself that Barrington loved her, or that he must have conjectured what her feelings were towards him. She did not dwell upon the thought that, if he and she were really all in all to one another, nothing—not even Léon's interests—ought to keep them apart. How could she, when the man whom she loved had as yet given her no right to do so? But, as the upshot of a good deal of confused and perplexed self-communing, she did determine that the chestnut mare should return forthwith to the Broadridge stables, where, if she had only known it, Barrington and Leigh were, at that very moment, deep in a conversation, in the course of which her name had recurred at tolerably frequent intervals.

Digitized by Google

The two friends had visited every stall and loose-box, had duly criticised the condition of their occupants, had seen some of the horses go out for exercise, and now Leigh had seated himself upon an upturned bucket before the stable-door, and was puffing at a short wooden pipe while, with half-closed eyes and patient mien, he listened to a protracted discourse from his host, who was pacing to and fro as he talked, and pausing, every now and then, in front of his auditor, to emphasize a point or round a period.

"I admit the justice of your arguments," the orator was saying—"I admit that there are serious objections to my marrying a lady who is not English by birth, and who will of course be, all her life, more or less under the influence of the priests. I don't mind going even further, and allowing that there are certain subjects upon which she and I might very possibly not find ourselves in complete sympathy. Moreover, I fully agree with you in thinking that such a girl as Helen Ashley is far better fitted to become the wife of an English country-gentleman than Mademoiselle de Mersac, and that, in the matter of marriage, a wise man will pay more heed to the long years to come than to the passion of the present."

"Didn't know I'd said all that," remarked Leigh, parenthetically; "but it sounds very sensible."

"It is sensible, and therefore you said it. Or else you said it, and therefore it is sensible. A Yarmouth bloater is not more impregnated with salt than you are with common sense. You are the best of fellows, my dear old Leigh, but you are a Philistine of the Philistines."

"Ah, I don't understand that kind of slang; but if a Philistine means a man who does his best to see facts as they are, instead of perpetually trying to mystify himself and everybody about him, I glory in being one."

"Of course you do, and quite right too. I never said there weren't good points about a Philistine. We are what we are; we can't help our natures, and may as well be proud of our several excellences. I, for instance, am not commonplace, and I am glad of it. Jeanne is not commonplace; our intercourse has not been commonplace; and why, in Heaven's name, are we to hurry it into a commonplace ending?"

Leigh knocked out the ashes from his pipe against the heel of his boot, and looked up with an air of wearied toleration.

"If I can make out what you are driving at, may I be—married myself!" he ejaculated. "When you began to talk, I certainly understood that what you were arguing to prove was that you would be doing a wise thing in marrying this French girl, though the rest of the world would probably think otherwise. Now, as far as I can see, you are protesting against such a 'commonplace' notion. But, if you don't intend marriage, what on earth *do* you intend? You say you are not going in for a mere flirtation; you are for ever swearing that you can't live without the girl; and yet, you know, you won't be able to go on galloping

Digitized by Google

about the country with her, and larking over fences till the end of your life, unless you get at least as far as an engagement. And in the meantime, as a matter of detail, she happens to be engaged to another fellow.'

Mr. Leigh stated the case quite correctly. His friend had, indeed, shifted his ground in the course of argument, as was habitual with him; but Barrington was not the man to be put out by any charge of inconsistency. He simply ignored it, and proceeded to follow out his train of thought.

"No doubt," said he, "we shall settle down, some day, as Mr. and Mrs. Barrington, and have people here to stay with us, and ask the neighbours to dinner once a month, and go to church on Sundays—no, by-the-by, I suppose we shall not go to church together. All that will be very delightful, and I ask for nothing better; only don't you see that, when that time comes, there will be an end to the 'schöne Liebeszeit?' Marriage, which to people of your stamp is the goal and crown of all love-making, is to me simply the death-blow of romance. Not of love, mind you—I don't say that—but unquestionably of one of the subtlest charms of love. Remove the element of uncertainty, and you enter upon an entirely new phase of the sentiment. I am uncertain now, and I rejoice in being so. Suppose I were to ask Jeanne point-blank to-day to be my wife, how do I know that she would not refuse me? How do I know that she would not consider herself bound in honour to this broken-down *viveur* whom her friends have driven her into accepting? And there again is another argument against hurry. It is quite even betting that M. de Saint-Luc gets knocked on the head before the war is over; and if that happy deliverance should come about, I could step into his place with much greater propriety and less fuss, don't you see? But the fact is, Leigh, that you and I should never see these questions in the same light if we were to talk till Doomsday. Your idea of happiness is a bachelor life. Failing that, you would like to get your courtship over as quickly as possible, and take a fresh start as a pattern husband and father. Your ideal world is a pleasant, fertile valley, neatly marked out into pastures and ploughed fields, with flocks and herds, and crops in due season. You would be quite content to plod along it, in a steady, equable way, for the remainder of your days; and all the time you would be so engrossed in watching your prosperity increase, and your children growing up like what's-his-names about your table, that you would never once raise your eyes to the measureless blue overhead where the skylarks are trilling, or to the heights where, far removed from the confused chatter, and oaths, and groans, and laughter of men, the snowy summits sleep on, in calm beauty and grandeur, from century to century."

"The right honourable gentleman resumed his seat amidst prolonged cheering, and the proceedings, which had lasted up to an advanced hour, then terminated."

Digitized by Google

That was all the response that Barrington got from his confidant, who now rose, and sauntered away towards the house. But when he had gone some ten paces on his way, he faced about, and called out—

"I say, are you really off the day after to-morrow?"

"Yes; I believe so."

"Oh! Well, it's no business of mine, and I don't suppose for a moment that you will be guided by me; but, if I were you, I would have something settled definitely, one way or the other, before I went." And, with these parting words of advice, Mr. Leigh vanished.

As for Barrington, he shrugged his shoulders with a slight deprecating smile, as who should say, "What else could you expect? Does a thorn bear grapes, or a thistle figs?"—and shortly afterwards, mounting his horse, rode across the park towards Holmhurst.

He congratulated himself upon his good fortune when he found Jeanne alone in the library; but the manner of his reception was scarcely what he had anticipated. Jeanne was feeling a little nervous and disturbed in mind; and when Mr. Barrington was announced, wished, perhaps for the first time in her life, that he were away. But as there was no getting rid of his physical presence, she set herself to put him at a moral distance—a task never very difficult to her. She laid aside the half-written letter upon which she had been engaged, rose, shook hands, and resumed her seat with a certain chilly dignity of demeanour which had often damped Barrington's spirits before now. He did not, however, choose to notice it, but drew a chair up beside hers, and remarked that it was a beautiful day, and that he hoped she was coming out for a ride. She said no; she did not think she would be able to ride that day.

"What a bore!" exclaimed Barrington. "I did hope we should have managed a ride this afternoon, because I don't know when our next one will be. To-morrow I am obliged to do a little justicing, and the day after I have got to go away on a long-promised visit to some friends."

"Your aunt told me you would be going away soon," Jeanne observed.

"Yes. I wish to goodness I wasn't; but I can't get out of it now, I'm afraid. We shall meet again though, before very long, I hope."

To this no reply was forthcoming.

"You *are* going to stay with my aunt in January, are you not?" Barrington asked, rather anxiously.

"Perhaps. I have not thought much about it yet. I suppose your friend Mr. Leigh goes away too?"

"Leigh? Oh, yes, he goes, of course. It is a great nuisance. I wish I had not engaged myself to these people."

"Oh, you are sure to enjoy yourself when once you are away," said Jeanne. "But we shall all miss you both," she added politely.

Barrington grunted. "I don't care about being missed in that

Digitized by Google

collective sort of way," he said. After which there was silence for a few moments.

"You will give Zephyr a gallop every day I hope," resumed Barrington, presently. Zephyr was the name of the chestnut mare.

"I think not. I made up my mind this morning, before you came, that I would not ride any more."

Was Barrington very much to be blamed if he fancied that his approaching departure might have something to do with this resolution?

"Riding all by oneself is dull work, certainly," he said, while a satisfied smile, which he could not altogether repress, gathered about the corners of his mouth.

"I like riding alone," answered Jeanne. "I have been accustomed to be left to myself all my life, and I often think it is much pleasanter not to be obliged to talk to somebody. But, for several reasons, I do not wish to use your horse any longer. You have been very kind to allow me to keep her all this time."

"Might one venture to ask your reasons?" Barrington inquired.

"Well, one of them is that I am afraid I have not been enough with my cousins lately. They must have thought it rather rude in me to leave them as I have done. And, besides, I am sure it is not right to make use of another person's horse as if it were one's own. What should I do if any accident happened?"

Barrington protested that he had not the slightest fear of any harm coming to his property while under such skilled guidance as that of Mademoiselle de Mersac; and moreover that the safety of Zephyr was a matter of complete indifference to him, so long as that of her rider was not endangered, and a good deal more to the same effect; but Jeanne was not to be shaken, and at last closed the discussion by a decisive, "I am very much obliged to you, but I do not intend to ride Zephyr again."

"You are not yourself this morning," said Barrington, abruptly. "Is anything the matter?"

"No. At least nothing particular. It is only that I have had letters from France."

"No bad news of your brother, I trust. Was your letter from him?"

"No; it was from—somebody else." (M. de Saint-Luc's name had not once been mentioned between these two people since the day of their first meeting in Broadridge Park.) "But Léon is quite well, I am thankful to say. It is not that."

"I suppose it is about somebody else's safety, then, that you feel anxious," suggested Barrington, in a somewhat altered voice.

"I am not anxious at all," answered Jeanne; "not more so, that is, than I have been ever since Léon left me; only I feel that I have been enjoying myself too much. I cannot exactly explain what I mean; but

Digitized by Google

you would understand if you were in my place. One does not really forget," she continued, speaking more to herself than to her listener. "One's heart does not ache the less because one talks and laughs like other people; but yet it seems a shameful thing, and almost a treachery to the absent, that one should be pleased and amused so easily. How terrible it is to think that, at this very moment, Léon may be lying wounded, with nobody to take care of him! And M. de Saint-Luc too," she added, with a visible effort.

Barrington was not in the least jealous. That quick sympathy and profound acquaintance with human nature which he especially prided himself upon enabled him to surmise, without any difficulty, what Jeanne's present frame of mind was, and what had led her into it. She had a tender conscience and a keen sense of duty, he thought; and for these fine qualities he magnanimously admired her the more. Still it would not do to let her fall under the sway of an exaggerated self-distrust.

"Oh, but you must not torment yourself in that manner," said he, cheerfully; "because that is quite a wrong way of looking at things. If you were to shut yourself up in your room all day, and speak to nobody, who would be the better for it? Do you think it would increase your brother's happiness to know that you were making yourself miserable? Or do you suppose him so silly as to imagine that you do not care for him, because you can still enjoy a gallop in the fresh air? It would be as reasonable to say that there was treachery in admiring a beautiful sunset—or music—or pictures."

But Jeanne shook her head. "It is useless to make excuses like that," she sighed, a little impatiently. "I am sure it has been all wrong from beginning to end. I wish, I *wish* they had let me stay at home in Algiers!"

"I am sorry you wish that," said Barrington, in a low voice. "Though perhaps," he added presently, "I have more reason to wish it than you."

He glanced up as he spoke, and found Jeanne's great, serious eyes turned full upon him. And then there passed between them a long look—one of those looks which it is so exceedingly reprehensible for a young man to indulge in, seeing that he may thus acquire knowledge to which he has no fair right without committing himself to words.

It was not the first time that Barrington had thus interrogated Jeanne's eyes; and now, perhaps, they could tell him little that he did not already know. Once before, it may be remembered, he had found himself in a somewhat similar situation, and had lost his head, and said something—he hardly remembered what. And then Madame de Breuil had come in, leaning on her stick, and had brought him to his senses in a trice. No such calming apparition was required to keep his lips closed upon the present occasion. To give Barrington his due, it was not out of prudence, nor from any misgivings as to the strength of his purpose,

Digitized by Google

that he remained silent, but in part owing to the motives which he had avowed to Leigh earlier in the day, and in a still greater degree, because he was really uncertain how Jeanne, in her present temper, would be likely to receive an open declaration of love. It was quite within the limits of possibility that she might take it as an insult. He looked volumes, therefore, and said nothing; and presently Mademoiselle de Mersac herself dispelled the tension of the moment in the most unromantic manner in the world. She called Turco, who, all this time, had been sleeping peacefully under the table; and, as the huge brute came out, stretching himself and wagging his tail lazily—"He has got something wrong with his ear," said she. "I wish you would look at it, and tell me what you think is the matter."

After that, there was no further danger of a distressing scene. Who could revert to heroics after reporting upon the condition of a dog's ear? Barrington, half-relieved, half-vexed, went down upon his knees, made the necessary investigations, delivered his opinion, and was about to sit down again, when the Miss Ashleys came in, rosy and radiant, from their morning walk, and cordially begged him to stay to luncheon.

He spent another two hours, or more, in the house, but he was not permitted to be alone again with Jeanne. He bade her good-bye in the presence of the whole Ashley family, and, with their eyes upon him, did not dare to say more than—

"It is not good-bye for long, though, I hope. If I am not back here in the course of a week or two, we shall be sure, at least, to meet in London."

To which Jeanne, with a perfectly unmoved countenance, responded, "I hope we may—if I go there."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

On the March.

Barrington was so accustomed to being missed whenever he went away, and he himself regretted so much the necessity of leaving home just now, that he almost apologised to his friends at Holmhurst as he shook hands with them all, and bade them farewell for a time. But in truth the loss of his society afflicted nobody very greatly at this especial juncture. Jeanne was thankful to be relieved from a position of which the falseness had at last fully dawned upon her; Mr. and Mrs. Ashley were beginning to suspect that their daughter's nose had been a little put out of joint of late by her magnificent cousin; and Helen herself, having no doubt whatever upon this point, hailed the change with positive joy. Moreover, Christmas was at hand; and that alone was sufficient to keep the thoughts and the fingers of the whole family occupied.

Everybody above the age of eighteen hates Christmas, and now-a-days

Digitized by Google

everybody says so; but Holmhurst was in all things some twenty or thirty years behind time, and to have suggested in that house that the last week of December and the first of January were not the two merriest of the whole twelvemonth, would have been almost tantamount to a confession of atheism. The jollity of the season, so far as the actual members of the household were concerned, took, it must be confessed, a somewhat heavy and substantial form; still, such as it was, they welcomed it for old associations' sake, and if it brought them no other blessing, the preparations for it provided them at least with plenty of work. There were blankets to be counted, flannel petticoats to be made, and toys to be selected for the school-children's Christmas-tree, not to speak of the church decorations, which were always elaborate, and which the rector's wife, being fat and lazy, gladly handed over to the care of "those dear, good Ashley girls." And besides all this, every room in the house had to be got ready for the annual visit of certain uncles, aunts, and cousins, some of whom were asked because they were well-to-do, and others because they were conspicuously the reverse; for Mr. Ashley prided himself upon observing all the old traditions of Christmas, even down to the entertaining of poor relations. Jeanne helped with the flannel petticoats, and earned some praise by her neat and speedy workmanship.

"I learnt to sew quickly during the summer," she explained, in answer to some expressions of surprise from her cousins. "We had a great deal of work to do for the wounded, and there was not always much time to spare."

"If I had a brother, or a—or anybody I cared a great deal for at the war," said Helen, "I should go off to France at once as a nurse, so as to be ready to take care of him when he was wounded."

"Perhaps he wouldn't be wounded," remarked Jeanne.

"Oh, he would be sure to be, sooner or later. At least, I don't mean that—only I should like to be there in case, you know."

"One must learn nursing before one can be of any use."

"And Helen always turns faint at the sight of blood," put in Blanche. "The other day a man in the village got dreadfully hurt by a threshing machine, and of course they insisted upon our seeing him, as people in that rank of life always do; and Helen pushed me into the room first, and stood close behind me with her eyes shut the whole time—you know you did, Helen."

"I don't enjoy looking at horrid things," confessed Helen; "but of course I could do it if it were really necessary."

"I suppose we can all do what we are obliged to do," observed Jeanne. "One says things are impossible; but they have to be done, and somehow they *are* done. This time last year I should have thought it quite impossible to live as I am doing now, knowing that Léon is in constant danger and not even having a letter from him for weeks; and yet here I am, you see, and I can eat and sleep easily enough, and help you to make petticoats."

Digitized by Google

"Yes, and flirt with young men, who by rights should belong to others, too," poor Helen may have thought; but she only said, "You must often be anxious in this bitter weather."

"I try not to think about it; it is no use imagining things. When I heard last they were at Bourges, where at least they would have four walls and a roof to protect them. I try to hope they are there still."

It was as well that she could not see her brother at that particular moment. Had she been able to do so, there would have been an end of her petticoat-making for the rest of the afternoon; for in truth she had never let her mind dwell much upon the details of campaigning, and could hardly have borne to think of Léon as actually suffering from cold or hunger. The reader, however, being presumably more callous, will hardly object to turn away for a time from our heroine, as she sits before the fire with her needlework in her hand, her cousins' unending chatter in her ears, and her own thoughts in her mind, and to pay a flying visit to two other personages of the story, who have been out of sight for some months, and whom he will find working out their destiny under much less comfortable circumstances.

Far south of Holmhurst, in wealthy, grape-bearing Burgundy, the scene, in these last days of 1870, is as wintry as a Siberian view and as cheerless as the prospects of France. Hill and valley, field and vineyard, lie buried beneath the snow. From the sky, leaden overhead, but growing inky towards the horizon, a few flakes are still falling, driven before a moaning wind which raises eddying white columns from the ground as it sweeps on, and lays bare the boughs of the sparse trees. Across this melancholy landscape an enormous railway-train, composed almost entirely of cattle-trucks and vans, and dragged by two puffing engines, is slowly, very slowly making its way. Gradually it slackens speed, while the leading engine sends forth a prolonged whistle—for the signals of a wayside station have just come in sight—and soon it comes to a standstill altogether. The loosely-coupled trucks bump one against the other; the hiss of the escaping steam dies away; the engines join in one last discordant shriek; and then all is still. But ere long a murmur of growls and maledictions begins to make itself heard. "Accursed railways of the devil! here is the tenth stoppage in the course of fifteen miles. If they can't advance, why don't they let us get out and march!"—"*Nom de Dieu!* is it worth while to bring a man all the way from Perpignan to freeze to death in a horse-box? They would have done better to shoot us all at home; it would have been sooner over and have cost less."—"Ah, when I told you that these station-masters have all come to a good understanding with the Prussians! It is to give their dear friends time to retreat at their ease that they keep us here starving of hunger and cold." Lean, dirty faces peer out through the unglazed apertures which do duty for windows; hoarse grumblings grow louder and louder. "Go on then—never mind the signals!"—"Are we to stay here all night?"—"What are you waiting

Digitized by Google

for? The enemy?"—"*En avant, sacrebleu! en avant!*" Finally the wag of the crowd pipes out, in feeble imitation of the sonorous warning familiar to more fortunate travellers, "*Les voyageurs pour la ligne de Besançon, Belfort, Berlin, en voitu-r-e!*" Whereat there is a shrill chorus of laughter, for it does not take much to amuse the French soldier, and when want and suffering have done their worst upon him, his indomitable good humour will still come bravely to the front.

These men had been already twelve hours cramped up in their miserable boxes, with nothing to eat but mouldy biscuit, nothing to drink but water, and no plentiful supply of either. Some of them had their fingers and toes frost-bitten, many were ill, a few dying, or near it. They were an undisciplined lot for the most part, but they neither did nor said anything much worse than has been recorded. In a third-class carriage, near the front of the train, were a handful of officers—a colonel of cavalry, wrapped in his cloak and sleeping profoundly; an engineer, in spectacles; a major of artillery; a fat doctor, and a few young men wearing a species of uniform which might have belonged to any branch of the service. One of the latter put his head out of the window and hailed a passing guard.

"What is it now? What are we stopping for?"

"How should I know?" returned the man, sulkily, with a jerk of his shoulders, and slouched on to talk to the engine-driver. Officers were held in no great respect in France in those evil days; even their own men did not always take the trouble to salute them; and when one is only a lieutenant in a *corps franc*, one must not be too punctilious. The snubbed questioner withdrew his head quite meekly, and sank back upon the wooden seat with a gesture of mute resignation.

"You don't happen to have a cigarette about you, do you, de Mersac?" asked his opposite neighbour.

"Not I. Nor anything to drink either. Nor anything to eat, if you come to that."

"Good. Precisely my own condition. And the worst of it is that I am much too cold to sleep."

"All that would be nothing if there were any necessity for it; but to think that all this time we might just as well have been at Bourges! that we are sent into action almost too weak to sit upon our horses simply because we are governed by a set of dolts who imagine that they can despatch an army from one place to another as easily as a telegram!"

"Ah, the old story! Twenty thousand men are wanted to cut off the Prussian communications in the east. Nothing easier—make it forty thousand, so as to leave a margin. March them all down to the station double-quick; send off train after train as fast as they can be got ready; get the line hopelessly blocked; and then trust in Providence to put things straight somehow or other, and set to work composing proclamations. That is the way to carry on war according to the great citizen Gambetta. I wish I had him here!"

Digitized by Google

"Patience, young men, patience," said the fat doctor, placidly. "Be thankful that you have still all your limbs about you. You will see the Germans soon enough, never fear!"

"That we certainly shall not, if we are to perish of cold in a railway carriage like so many flies." But at this moment another loud whistle pierced the air; the train began to move again, and the jerk awoke the sleeping colonel, who drew down his legs, rubbed his eyes, and asked, "Where are we? At Autun?"

"God knows," answered the artilleryman. "Are we going to Autun? Apropos, M. de Saint-Luc, have you any idea where we *are* going?"

"Not much. I have my own impressions; but I have been told next to nothing officially."

"The report at Bourges was that our destination was to be Besançon."

"I don't know what we should do when we got there."

The gunner shrugged his shoulders; but one of the younger officers struck in eagerly—"We should invade Germany—at least that is what everybody is saying. It is only a question of one victory after all. We raise the siege of Belfort, we intercept the enemy's communications, and we relieve Paris."

"I see."

There was still a little spirit left among those who had fought so well and been beaten so often, a little confidence in their rulers, a lingering grain of faith in Fortune. Léon and his brother officers soon forgot all the sufferings of the present in proving to one another the feasibility of some such surprise as the gossips of Bourges had prophesied. Saint-Luc smiled as he listened to them, but took no part in the discussion. He himself, knowing something of soldiering and of the state of Bourbaki's army, had despaired long since; but it was not for him to discourage others, nor was he the less ready to struggle on to the end.

"In the meantime," said he at last, "let us hope that our next stoppage may be at a town where we can get some food for ourselves and for our horses; for if we go on at our present pace, we shall hardly reach Besançon before the day after to-morrow."

Their deliverance, however, was at hand. At a small wayside station the Éclaireurs received orders to leave the train; and the colonel had his work cut out for him to collect his men and get his shivering horses upon terra firma. Some of the latter had died upon the journey; others had to be abandoned; many of the men were found unable to stand, and were told to remain where they were. It was no very formidable body that moved away at length from the station towards the village whose name it bore, but which lay some two miles away from it. Saint-Luc admitted none but old soldiers into his corps—the nature of their service as scouts demanding experience as well as courage—and he had had proofs enough that those who rode behind him could do and bear as much as can be expected of mortals; nevertheless, as he glanced over his

Digitized by Google

shoulder at them now, he thanked his lucky stars that there were no Germans in the immediate neighbourhood.

"A handful of Uhlans could make short work of us," he thought. "What is one to do with starving men on starving horses? One thing is certain, they must be fed. I wonder whether there are any decent people in the village."

Apparently there was nobody there at all, decent or otherwise. No trace of an inhabitant was to be seen in the wide, snow-covered high road, or in the low white houses that bordered it; pigs and poultry—usually the inseparable adjuncts of a French village—there were none; every door was closed and every window shuttered; only from a chimney here and there arose a tell-tale thread of blue smoke. Saint-Luc had seen this kind of thing more than once before, and knew very well what it all meant. His orders to his officers were soon given. They were to get what was necessary—civilly if possible, but at all events to get it; they were to pay for everything they took; and, above all, they were to lose no time. He himself rode on, accompanied by Léon, his adjutant, to a farmhouse a few furlongs out of the village, where there was an empty straw-yard, and stables, and outhouses, and a rick or two. Here, much shouting, thundering at the door and threatening of arson, as a last resource, revealed the presence of a lean old woman of forbidding aspect.

"What do you want?" asked this inhospitable person sullenly, thrusting her head out of a half-opened window.

"Something to eat, to begin with," answered Léon. "We are not particular; give us what you have got and let us go, and we will pay you a fair price. We have money."

"Well, then, you will not have what you want, money or no money. I know you with your money! Break open the door if you like—you are the stronger—and eat me, for you will find nothing else here. And you will not find much flesh upon my bones, I promise you."

"My good woman," began Saint-Luc.

"Good woman here, good woman there! I tell you we have got nothing. Do you understand?—nothing! First come, first served. The Prussians took all we had; then came the Garibaldians and helped themselves to the rest; and now there are but the four walls and the bare boards left for you."

"I can't waste any more time," said Saint-Luc. "Tell them to force the door, de Mersac."

"Stop, you thieves! you villains! Do you call yourselves Frenchmen, and would you ruin a poor widow? I will let you in."

Bolts and chains were slowly withdrawn; the door was gingerly opened an inch or two, and a skinny hand appeared through the aperture. "Pay first," said the voice of the old woman from within.

Saint-Luc laughed, and handed out a couple of napoleons. "That will do till we see what you are going to give us," said he, pushing past her into the darkened kitchen, where a fine wood fire was blazing. "You

Digitized by Google

might remember that we are friends, and that we are fighting your battles for you, old mother."

"Friends or enemies, it comes to much the same thing. Ah! those Garibaldians! People who call themselves friends, and rob you of your last sou, and use the churches for stables—thank you! the Prussians suit me quite as well."

"Nobody is going to rob you," said Léon, who had followed his chief into the house, and was looking about him with somewhat hungry eyes. "And why did you tell us those lies? You peasants are all the same."

"How was I to know you had money?" retorted his hostess, upon whom the sight of gold had already produced a slight mellowing effect. "I am not the only one who tells lies in these bad times, young gentleman. And what I said was not so far off the truth either. I can kill two or three fowls for you and the other officer, and there is a little bacon; but as for the soldiers, I could not feed them if you offered me a fortune. Search the house if you don't believe me."

Léon took her at her word. There would be no harm in having a look round, he thought, while the chickens were roasting, and it was absolutely necessary that something should be discovered for the men's eternal soup. French soldiers, as is well known, have a semi-miraculous gift for the concoction of that savoury mess out of the most unpromising materials; and though Léon's researches were not crowned with any brilliant success, yet a sufficiency of scraps was ultimately collected, in the farmhouse and elsewhere, to furnish what was required, and to restore the flagging spirits of the whole corps.

They were not hard to please, those gallant, ragged fellows. Give them soup, a fire to warm themselves by, and a tumbler or two of rough red wine, and they asked for nothing more. Enthusiastic they were no longer; but they were patient and willing, accustomed to hard knocks, hard fare, and scant thanks; ready for active service in any form; and now the rumour that they were for once about to take the offensive sufficed in itself to console them for a great deal. None of them had more than a very vague idea of where they were and of whither they were going; but these were mere matters of detail, and besides it was nothing new to them to be in the dark as to their whereabouts. The colonel, never given to be communicative, disliked being asked questions, and his officers, knowing this, seldom interrogated him. When they did so, their curiosity was not often gratified. Léon, who upon this occasion ventured to throw out a hint or two, got no information for his pains.

"Werder must be somewhere between Vesoul and Gray, I take it," said he, buckling up his sword, when the hasty repast was at an end; "but I suppose we shall know all about it before long. We are off on the old errand of course—feeling for the enemy to begin with, searching for our own general afterwards, and thinking ourselves more than lucky if we find the second as easily as the first. Well, it is better to be an éclaireur than a general after all; one obeys orders and asks no questions

Digitized by Google

—that is simple enough. Only I *should* like to know whether our object is to join Faidherbe or to make a raid into Germany."

Saint-Luc was standing by the window looking out at the darkening landscape and the snowflakes, which were still dropping at intervals and freezing as they fell.

"There are so many things that one would like to know," he remarked. "I should like, for instance, to know why I was born; but nobody will ever be able to tell me that;—and then I should like to know where I am to sleep to-night, which is a mystery that will be solved in a few hours. And I should like to know what certain people far away are doing at this moment, though I have no doubt at all that it is a very good thing for me that I can't. Did it ever occur to you that if we knew the whole truth about everything, nine-tenths of us would most likely go and hang ourselves? Come, let us get to horse again, and follow our noses; and don't you trouble yourself too much to find out whither the road is leading you. The more you knew of it the less you would like it perhaps."

Already the bugles had sent forth their brief summons, and the regiment only awaited the colonel's order to march. A few of the villagers—poverty-stricken, timorous-looking folks—had emerged from their hiding-places on discovering that the invaders were Frenchmen this time, not Prussians nor Garibaldini, and had now come shivering out into the road to see the last of these ragged horsemen, and to bid them God-speed. For good wishes cost nothing; and if there be anything that can warm the heart of the French peasant, it is probably the touch of hard coin.

As the little band began to move with a muffled trampling over the snow, and the clank of a sabre or the champing of a bit here and there, some of the men set up a low, melancholy chant. It was the familiar strain of the Marseillaise that they sang; but what a different Marseillaise from that which had rung triumphantly and defiantly throughout the length and breadth of France a few short months before!—

> "Amour sacré de la patrie,
> Conduis, soutiens nos bras vengeurs!"

The chorus spread through the ranks, one man after another taking it up in a sad perfunctory sort of way, and grew fainter and fainter as they passed out from the village, and wound round the shoulder of a low hill—a straggling troop of shadowy riders in long blue cloaks that soon faded into the gathering darkness.

"Would one not say they were a regiment of ghosts singing their own dirge!" muttered the old woman who had entertained Saint-Luc and Léon. "Soldiers were another race in my time. That colonel is a fine man, but he has not the look of a joyous comrade. *Enfin!—puisque ça paye.*"

And with that she bolted and barred her door once more, and sat down to count her earnings.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"Way to where?"

Digitized by Google

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

FEBRUARY, 1880.

Mademoiselle de Mersac.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

BEDFORD SQUARE.

BEDFORD SQUARE is not a cheerful situation. Miss Barrington, who lived there, was always ready to admit that much. She maintained, however, that there was no more comfortable, no better-built house in London than that which had come to her by inheritance. Its rooms were spacious; its staircase was broad and shallow; there was accommodation in it for more guests than its mistress ever cared to invite. The heavy, solid furniture, the old pictures darkened by many a year of London smoke, the well-used books in the library, in their sober, uniform binding of brown calf—all these would look shabby and out of place in a more fashionable quarter; and, in spite of many an entreaty and remonstrance, Miss Barrington declined to move them. Bloomsbury suited her well enough, she said; and if any of the nephews and nieces, god-sons and god-daughters, who honoured her with so much of their attention found the journey thither from South Kensington or Belgravia more than they could undertake, why the alternative course of remaining away was open to them.

Digitized by Google

It was on a grey January afternoon that Jeanne was driven to the door of this hospitable mansion in the brougham which had been sent to the station to meet her. Christmas, laboriously merry, was over and done with; so, for the time, was life at Holmhurst, and the society of its well-meaning, if somewhat commonplace, inmates; and now our heroine was about to enter upon fresh experiences, to be introduced to new faces, and to renew her acquaintance with one or two already familiar to her. And, perhaps, the latter prospect was what she chiefly looked forward to, and may have had something to do with the cheerfulness of her demeanour.

Some cause for inward rejoicing she must have had; for if there be a spectacle in the world calculated to cause the heart of a foreigner to die within him, it must surely be that of London as viewed through the gloom and moisture of a winter's afternoon; yet Mademoiselle de Mersac stepped lightly out on to the pavement, while the footman was making a tremendous and most unnecessary noise with the door-knocker, and surveyed, with a smile of universal benevolence the hideous buildings around her, the miserable bare trees in the square, the dirty old effigy who looked down upon her shamefacedly from his stone pedestal, and the crossing-sweeper who came hurrying up, hat in hand.

The crossing-sweeper received an unearned sixpence, much to the disgust of Miss Barrington's butler, who had now thrown open the double doors, and presently Jeanne was alone in the drawing-room upstairs, awaiting the appearance of her hostess.

She had not long to wait in solitude. But it was not Miss Barrington who came clattering down the stairs, burst open the drawing room door, and advanced, with both hands outstretched, exclaiming, "How glad I am that you have come! Do you know, I never heard you were expected to-day until I came in, about ten minutes ago."

"How do you do, Mr. Barrington?" says Jeanne, as coolly as if she had not been dreaming of this meeting for the last fortnight. "Are you staying here too, then?"

"What, in this house, do you mean? Oh, no; I have rooms of my own in London—ever so far away, I am sorry to say. I am afraid you must think my Aunt Susan rather rude for not being in to receive you; but she is an oddity, you know; no one minds what she does. I got a note from her this morning, telling me to be here punctually at four o'clock. I accordingly turned up at that hour, and was told that she had gone out. But this house has always been a sort of second home to me, and I can do just as I like in it; so I went upstairs, to a room which has been reserved for my use ever since I was a boy, and where I sometimes do a little painting, and so on; and there I found a second note to say that you were coming up from Holmhurst, and that I was to receive you, and apologise for my aunt's absence. She is a good old thing," concluded Barrington, reflectively. But how her goodness had been evidenced by this particular line of conduct he did not state;

Digitized by Google

and that, no doubt, was Mademoiselle de Mersac's reason for remaining silent.

"I hope you don't mind?" resumed Barrington presently.

"Oh, no," Jeanne said, "she did not mind at all." But, for all that, she was not quite pleased. It would have been much pleasanter, she thought, if Mr. Barrington had been invited to dinner, instead of having been asked to receive her upon her arrival. And how long would she have to sit there in her travelling-dress, and with the dust and cinders of the railway upon her?

Perhaps Barrington, who had never removed his eyes once from her face since his entrance, may have read there some indication of these thoughts, for he exclaimed suddenly—

"Good gracious me, what a donkey I am! You would like to take off your hat, would you not? And then, of course, you will want some tea. I will ring, and tell them."

The butler came up in answer to his summons, and said that tea would be ready in a few minutes; and Miss Barrington's maid appearing in his wake, Jeanne was conducted to her room, where she remained for what seemed to Barrington an interminable time.

He roamed about the room during her absence, sometimes standing with his back to the fire, sometimes looking absently out of the window and drumming with his fingers on the pane, picking up one of the books that lay on the table every now and then, or pausing to examine some recent additions to Miss Barrington's store of hideous and valuable china; but all the time he was thinking only of Jeanne. How rejoiced he was to see that lovely pale face again; and how he had missed it! he said to himself with a certain disquietude, and yet not without some mixture of satisfaction at the remembrance. He had been visiting at several country-houses, where he had been one of a large and very merry party; he had spent the greater part of the time in an excellent hunting country; he had met the people whose society he generally enjoyed the most, and he had found the whole thing an unmitigated bore. Evidently he could not live without Jeanne. Yes, it had come to that; and doubtless, before very long, it would come to an engagement. "I can't lose sight of her again," mused Barrington, as he paced to and fro. "Before she leaves this, the fatal words must be spoken. Dear, dear, how funny it will all be! Fancy her making my tea for me in the morning, and sewing buttons on to my shirts! Oh, bathos! It will be a great nuisance having to announce the engagement. How furious the Ashleys will be! and all one's relations too!"

This set him wondering what could be the cause of Aunt Susan's conduct in bringing him and Jeanne together, as she evidently intended to do. Was it that she was tired of Helen Ashley, and had seized the first pretext that had come to hand for throwing her over? Was it that she had really taken a fancy to the beautiful stranger? Or was she behaving in this way out of pure love of mischief, and a desire to set

Digitized by Google

everybody by the ears? Barrington knew that some such motive had been at the root of more than one of his aunt's apparent eccentricities, and he was not disposed to count over much upon her support now. "I can do without her money—that's one thing," thought he; and then his reflections were cut short by Jeanne's re-appearance.

She seated herself beside the low tea-table, and began to pour out a cup of tea, while Barrington took a chair opposite to her.

"I hope you are not very tired after your journey," said he, just by way of opening the conversation.

"Tired?" she echoed, with some disdain. "No; I am not so easily tired as that."

"Of course not; I forgot. I am so accustomed to associating with ladies who are more or less frail and rickety, that I have come to look upon ordinary good health as the exclusive property of men. Isn't it an odd thing that hardly anybody is proud of being strong and well; whereas lots of people make a positive boast of their infirmities? My sister, for instance, would be desperately offended if I suggested that she could travel from Sevenoaks to Charing Cross without being completely knocked up."

"But your sister is really an invalid, is she not?"

"I don't know. Aunt Susan says a bucket of cold water is all she wants; and I am half inclined to hold the same opinion. There cannot be very much the matter with her, or she would have succumbed long ago to one of the violent courses of medical treatment she has been through. However, you will probably see her for yourself before long, and then you will be able to form your own judgment upon her. You won't like her, I know."

"How can you tell that?"

"Oh, she is not the sort of person whom you would be in the least inclined to put up with. I bear with her partly because she is my sister, and partly because I am of a tolerant nature, and don't expect any very near approach to perfection from anybody. But we won't waste time in talking about her. What is the news down at Holmhurst?"

"I don't think there is any news," replied Jeanne, consideringly. "Everybody is quite well, except my uncle, who——"

"Who has got the gout from drinking too much port wine during Christmas week. I know. He always does. It is a part of his annual programme, and he would not relinquish it for worlds. And I will venture to affirm that Mrs. Ashley's clothing-club has got into debt, and that the girls have two or three dances in prospect, and that one or more of the dogs has died of distemper. All these events come round as regularly as the month of January itself. Apropos, how did you leave my friend Turco?"

"I did not leave him at all," answered Jeanne. "I brought him with me."

Digitized by Google

"You *don't* mean to tell me that my Aunt Susan has actually invited a dog into her house!" exclaimed Barrington, with raised eyebrows of astonishment. "You must indeed have won her heart."

"She did not exactly invite him to the house," Jeanne explained. "I left him at the stables, on my way here. He will be rather troublesome, I am afraid, for unless he has exercise he always gets ill; so I shall have to take him for a walk somewhere every day."

"Quite right. I'll go with you," observed Barrington, cheerfully.

"Oh, no, thank you," returned Jeanne, with a sudden chilly change in her voice; "that will not be at all necessary."

"I beg your pardon, but it will be most absolutely necessary. Young ladies can't walk about London alone, especially if they happen to be accompanied by a dog the size of a pony. Besides, you would lose yourself before you had walked a quarter of a mile."

"I lose myself!" cried Jeanne, indignantly. "What an idea! I should be ashamed to lose myself in a town. Why, even among the mountains in Algeria, where it is not very easy to distinguish one pass or valley from another, I could always find my way from place to place alone. I carry a little compass on my watch-chain; and as soon as I have—I do not know how to say it in English—*une fois que je me sois orientée*—I am quite at my ease."

"I'm afraid you won't find that system answer very well in London," said Barrington, laughing.

"Why not?" inquired Jeanne, loftily. She did not like being laughed at.

"Oh, well, for one thing, you wouldn't be able to steer a straight course, don't you see? You can't go over the tops of the houses, so you would be obliged to follow the streets, and the compass would come out at every corner. You had much better take me with you, and I will show you the most direct route to the parks—which, by the way, are an enormous distance from this quarter—and then, when your dog has chased the water-fowl and worried the sheep, I shall be at hand to plead your cause with the park-keeper, who will come up to give you in charge."

"Turco never does such things," answered Jeanne, really a little offended. "And I can find my way very well alone, thank you. I like walking alone."

At this moment Miss Barrington came in; and as soon as the proper amount of greeting, inquiry, and apology had been gone through, Barrington reverted to the controversy which her entrance had interrupted.

"Aunt Susan, is it the proper thing for a young lady to walk about the streets of Bloomsbury alone and unprotected?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. I used to do it when I was young, and nobody ever bothered me; but no doubt it would be wiser for you to take care of Mademoiselle de Mersac when she goes out, if that is what you mean."

"Mademoiselle de Mersac refuses to let me accompany her,"

Digitized by Google

answered Barrington. "She proposes to penetrate into the heart of London with the aid of a compass and a big dog, and she laughs me to scorn when I suggest the possibility of her losing her way. It is easy to see what that kind of pride is likely to lead to. A gloomy cell in the nearest police-station, mademoiselle, will be your fate. After a night of horrors, you will be led before a stern and pitiless old man, who will disbelieve every word you say, and denounce your conduct in terms which will make your blood curdle. You will be ordered to pay a fine, and as you are sure to have no money in your pocket, you will be cast into prison for seven days. Your dog will be dragged away, with a halter round his neck, and——"

"That is nonsense," interrupted Jeanne, gravely.

"Aunt Susan, I appeal to you. Is there anything improbable about this slight prophetic sketch? Is it likely that a dog, unaccustomed to London life, will be able to pass through all the temptations of the metropolis without getting himself and others into trouble? Think of the mutton-chops lying, all handy, at the butcher's, and the other dogs to be fought with, and the perambulators to be bowled over, and the prowling roughs whom it would seem a positive duty to tackle. I declare, if I were you, I would not allow a young lady under my charge to go about in such dangerous company for any consideration. That is, unless she had a prudent and experienced person with her to get her out of scrapes."

"Turco is never disobedient; and as for stealing from a butcher, he would not even dream of such a thing. I have always been able to take care of myself, and I always intend to do so," said Jeanne decisively.

"Well, settle it between you," said Miss Barrington, with a short laugh. "I must go and write some letters now. Stay to dinner, you know, if you like, Harry; there will be nobody but ourselves."

"I have asked a man to dine with me at the club—what a bore!" murmured Barrington, regretfully, as the door closed behind his aunt. "But I shall see you some time to-morrow, I hope. Of course you will have to be shown all the sights of London; and if I am to be allowed to do nothing else for you, I trust you will at least let me act as your guide to them."

"I suppose there is a great deal to be seen," remarked Jeanne, a little apprehensively.

"An immensity. Take architecture alone. There is the National Gallery, and Buckingham Palace, and St. Thomas's Hospital, and the church at the end of Langham Place, and many other remarkable buildings, all very striking in their way, and some absolutely unique in style. Then you will naturally want to climb to the top of the Monument, and likewise to the top of St. Paul's. The Zoological Gardens, the Underground Railway, and Madame Tussaud's will all repay a visit. After that there will be the British Museum, the Crystal Palace, the——"

"But must I really see all these things?" interrupted Jeanne, in dismay.

Digitized by Google

"Of course not. You ought to have a look at Westminster; but there is nothing else worth seeing in London just now, that I know of, except a picture of Gérôme's, which is in the French Artists' Gallery in Pall Mall. You did not come to England to admire French art, you will say; but unhappily we have none of our own to show you. That astounding exhibition, the Royal Academy, is not open at this time of year, and if it were, I am afraid you might search it through and through without coming across even an embryo Gérôme. French art is, and doubtless always will be, immeasurably superior to ours; and the reasons are not far to seek. In the first place, our painters habitually degrade themselves in their choice of subjects. They paint what will sell. They bow to the crude, vulgar taste of the purchaser, instead of trying to elevate it. Then, again——"

But it is perhaps hardly necessary to follow Mr. Barrington through the lengthy disquisition in which he thought fit to indulge upon this not very novel subject.

The next morning being a fine frosty one, and Miss Barrington having gone out upon business directly after breakfast, Mademoiselle de Mersac judged that the opportunity had now come for her to display her knowledge of locality and her independence of officious protection. Without any difficulty she found her way to the mews where she had left her dog on the previous afternoon, and was at once recognised by Miss Barrington's coachman, who touched his hat, opened the stable-door for her, and, in reply to her inquiry, told her that she would find Hyde Park easily enough.

"It's a goodish way, miss, but you can't make no mistake about it. Fust turn to your right, then fust to your left, then to your right agin, into a very fine, long street, and arter that you've only got to walk straight on, as fur as you can go, till you see the Park afore you."

Nothing could be plainer. "I am much obliged to you," said Jeanne, setting off at once, and remembering, with some inward amusement, Barrington's prophetic warnings. It was scarcely within the limits of possibility, she thought, that she should make any mistake in following such simple directions as these.

Many a pedestrian turned to look curiously after her, as she went on her way through the smoke-dimmed atmosphere, a tall, erect, black-draped figure, with her great white dog following at her heels; but both she and Turco were accustomed to being stared at, and never heeded the gaze of the vulgar multitude. One of them, indeed, was too busy making use of her own eyes to notice whether those of others were fixed upon her or not.

"What dirty streets! What hideous houses! What a stifling, choking air!" she was thinking to herself. "No wonder all the people look so pale. If I were Miss Barrington, I would not live here for the sake of any house, however comfortable. I wonder where the fashionable quarter is, and whether I shall pass through it before I reach the Park."

Digitized by Google

While she was thus musing, she found her path suddenly barred by a double line of cabs, omnibuses, and carts. There was a momentary stoppage; then the stream flowed on, and Jeanne, crossing hurriedly to the opposite pavement—for she was not quite at home amid the noisy traffic of a large town—pursued her way through a somewhat less crowded district. It was Oxford Street that she had left behind her, having altogether failed to recognise in it that imposing thoroughfare of which Miss Barrington's coachman had spoken; and having, in fact, before her mind's eye a vision of a broad, straight boulevard, at the end of which, in the far distance, the trees of Hyde Park might probably be discernible. But as she went on, and on, and the streets narrowed instead of widening, and the noise of hoofs and wheels grew ever fainter, she began to perceive that she must have made some mistake. She paused, and went over again in her mind the directions the man had given her. The first turn to the right, and the first, after that, to the left, she remembered to have taken. And then he had told her to turn to the right again, when she came to a fine, long street, which, apparently, she had somehow missed. It was evident, however, that Hyde Park must lie to her right hand, due west of her, and that if she set her face in that direction, and walked straight on, she must eventually strike it at one point or another.

This conclusion being beyond question, Jeanne proceeded to act upon it. She turned off at right angles to the street in which she had been standing, and immediately plunged into the midst of the most miserable, squalid, horrible collection of human dwellings she had ever beheld in her life. On either side of her were dirty, dilapidated houses, whose tenants must have been of a very destructive habit, judging from the amount of broken window-panes among them that were covered with scraps of paper or stuffed up with filthy rags. The street itself was littered with orange-peel, cabbage-stalks, and refuse of all kinds. A drunken old man was standing in the middle of it, his hands in his pockets, his eyes half closed, as he swayed from side to side, muttering to himself and laughing idiotically. A couple of bare-armed, touzle-headed viragoes were leaning out of an upper window, laughing too, but in harsh, cracked voices that had little sound of merriment in them. Jeanne hurried on.

After a time she came to a corner where two or three dirty, greasy-looking men were lounging round a post, and of one of them she boldly asked her way; but he glancing up at her with bloodshot eyes full of suspicion, and an infinite suppressed ferocity in his rejoinder, "Way to *wheer?*" she fairly lost heart, and walked away, as fast as she could, without uttering another word.

On she went, through narrow streets which seemed to lead only to a limitless succession of similar ones; round many a sharp corner, and into more than one *cul de sac*, whence she had to retrace her steps, with an ever-increasing feeling of doubt as to whether she would ever be able to

Digitized by Google

discover again the road by which she had entered into this labyrinth. She was getting a little frightened now—not, indeed, of the few people whom she met, and who, for the most part, scarcely took the trouble to raise their eyes from the ground to look at her; but of some vague danger that seemed to be in the air. And certainly there was something rather trying to the nerves in the silence that hung over this densely-populated district—a silence broken only by the sound of shuffling footsteps or of occasional hoarse, muffled voices, and intensified by the ceaseless roar of the traffic outside its limits, which rose and fell like breakers on a distant, shingly bar. Jeanne could not divest her mind of a shuddering conviction that presently one of these grim, mute tenements would burst into life, that from it would rush a gang of ruffians, and that, before she should have time to cry for help, she would be pinioned, gagged, robbed—perhaps murdered.

It was quite a relief when somebody came down the street, whistling a popular air cheerily, and breaking off, every now and then, to pipe out a few words of the chorus in a loud, shrill voice. Jeanne made for him at once.

"Will you be so good as to direct me to Hyde Park?" said she, in her best English.

"Hyde Park, miss? Certainly, miss. You come along o' me, I'll put you straight in the way. 'Arry" (to an acquaintance who was loitering on the other side of the street), "I shall 'ave to bid you good morning; I'm a-goin' to walk in the Park with this 'ere young lady."

He was a thin, undersized creature, whether boy or man it was not easy to determine. His clothes, which were of the poorest description, seemed to have been originally the property of a Hercules, so loosely did they hang upon his skinny person. His boots—also several sizes too large for him—scarcely held together; and from time to time he coughed in a way that it made Jeanne quite miserable to hear.

As he slouched along by her side, jerking his shoulders with every step, she looked down at the queer, wizened little face beneath his fur cap, and a sudden impulse made her ask, "Are you hungry?"

"I *ham*, miss," he replied, with emphasis. "Four days and four nights it is since I've 'ad a mossel o' bread to put in me—let alone meat or sperrits."

"That cannot be true," said Jeanne, unhesitatingly. She had seen famine times in Algeria, and knew pretty well the effect of hunger in its various stages upon the human subject.

Her guide did not allow himself to be at all disconcerted. If he was not starving, he said, he was at all events hungry; and he proceeded to relate so harrowing a tale of the temptations that beset a well-meaning young man who is without visible means of subsistence in London that in a very short time Jeanne had promised to give him ten shillings if he would agree, on his side, to associate no more with thieves and to try and obtain some honest work. This engagement he entered into quite readily,

Digitized by Google

confirming it with asseverations of the most solemn character; and as they were now once more in the region of cabs, he strongly recommended the young lady to take a four-wheeler, adding that he himself would be glad to retire, as there was a policeman in those parts with whom he was not upon terms of friendship.

"Good-bye, then," said Jeanne, "and thank you for bringing me so far. Here is——"

A pause. Jeanne's hand was slowly withdrawn from her pocket.

"What shall I do!" she exclaimed. "My purse is gone!"

"You don't say so, miss! Wot, yer purse gone?—likewise yer pocket-'andkercher, I s'pose? Dear, dear, dear! that's wot it is to walk about in a low quarter. They *are* a terrible bad lot 'ereabouts, miss, and that's the truth."

"But nobody ever brushed up against me even," protested Jeanne, still bewildered by her loss.

"Don't you believe it, miss? They're that hartful you wouldn't 'ardly know nothink about it if they was to take the 'at off your 'ead."

"Well, it cannot be helped. I should not mind so much, only now I have not ten shillings to give you."

"I beg you won't mention that, miss."

"Oh, but I must keep my promise; and if you will come to Number 63 Bedford Square this afternoon, I will certainly give you the ten shillings. *Oh!*—where's my dog?"

"Dorg, miss? I didn't see no dorg."

"You *must* have seen him—a big white dog—he was following me when I met you. Oh, what shall I do!"

"How do you do, Mademoiselle de Mersac? And pray, if one may ask, what has brought you to the Seven Dials?"

Jeanne turned round, and found the grey eyes of Mr. Leigh scrutinising her with an expression of some amusement.

"Oh, Mr. Leigh," she exclaimed, "I have had such a misfortune! I have lost my dog. What had I better do, do you think?"

"There is nothing to be done, except to advertise a reward for him. You will be sure to get him back in a day or two. It would be quite useless to search St. Giles's for him. But how do you come to be here at all?"

"I set out to walk to the Park," Jeanne explained; "and somehow I lost my way, and really I do not think I should ever have been heard of again if it had not been for this boy—where is he? Oh, now he is gone too! What a very odd and disagreeable place London seems to be!"

"The boy and the dog disappeared together, I suspect?"

"Oh, no! I missed Turco while I was still talking to him; and besides, he is to come to Bedford Square this afternoon, to be paid for showing me the way. For I have lost my purse also," concluded Jeanne, looking rather ashamed of herself.

"Then you may depend upon it that the boy has got your purse as

Digitized by Google

well as your dog, and I shall be very much astonished if you ever see him again."

"Poor boy!" sighed Jeanne. "He said he was a thief."

"Capital! And so your sympathies were aroused, and no doubt you would have given him all the money you had with you, if he had not helped himself to it already. That's just the sort of way Barrington gets done. I left him, a few minutes ago, talking Italian very loud to a dirty little wretch of an organ-grinder, with an admiring assembly elbowing him. I remained for a short time while they jabbered, and shook their fingers at each other, and then, as I didn't want to have my pocket picked, I walked on. Shall we wait for him? He was on his way to call upon you, I believe."

"Oh, I would rather not wait! I shall go home now if you will be so kind as to call a *fiacre* for me," answered Jeanne, feeling that she could not brave an interview with Barrington after so speedy a fulfilment of his predictions.

"Very well. Hullo!—get down, you brute!"

This last apostrophe was addressed to a large white dog, with a fragment of rope round his neck, who had suddenly darted out of a side street, and who, after knocking Mr. Leigh off the pavement, was now alternately leaping up to Jeanne's shoulders and cringing at her feet.

"*Ah, coquin!—mauvais drôle—va!*" cried Jeanne, indignantly. "I am obliged to scold him," she explained, "or else he would allow himself to be enticed away again. Do you see how he is licking his lips? I know very well how they have managed to steal him."

"He has probably killed somebody," observed Leigh, "your interesting little boy, I daresay. Well, it would serve him right. Here comes Barrington, all smiles. I think I could afford to lay a shade of odds that that organ-grinder has got a sovereign out of him. I say, Barrington, could you oblige me with the loan of a pound or so?"

"My dear fellow, I can't. I have just given away the last penny —what are you laughing at? And where has Mademoiselle de Mersac sprung from? And, oh, Turco, my esteemed friend, is that a rope that I see about your neck? What in the world has been happening?"

Explanations followed, at the end of which Jeanne found herself somehow being whirled along in a hansom, with Barrington by her side, and Turco between them. Poor Mr. Leigh had presumably been left in the street, to go home, or do with himself what he pleased. Neither Jeanne nor Barrington wasted another thought upon him.

"Another time," the latter was saying, "you will believe, perhaps, that I know something about the dangers of London. It is the greatest mercy in the world that you did not wander into some worse place than you did. There are plenty of streets in London out of which you certainly would not have been allowed to escape with your watch and rings. I do hope you will not attempt any more journeys of discovery."

"Oh, no!" answered Jeanne, with a slight shudder. "I shall never

Digitized by Google

wish to be alone in the streets of this horrible town again. But it is very disagreeable to be obliged always to take some one with you when you walk out."

"Very; but I'm afraid there is no help for it. We need not speak to each other, you know, unless you like."

Jeanne did not understand anything in the form of "chaff," which, indeed, is a product indigenous to British soil.

"That would be very absurd," she answered seriously. Then, after a moment's hesitation, "I do not know anything of English customs," she added. "With us it would not be considered *convenable* that I should go about with you like this. In the country it was perhaps a little different; but here——"

"Aunt Susan approves of it," replied Barrington; "and I can assure you that Aunt Susan never violates the proprieties. And, besides, we are such old friends."

"Yes," answered Jeanne, rather absently. And after that not another word was said until the hansom drew up in Bedford Square.

A carriage was standing before Miss Barrington's door, from which a lady was deliberately alighting with the assistance of a gentleman on one side and a footman on the other.

"It is the Seymours—my sister and her husband, you know," Barrington said, rather ruefully. "They are come to lunch. What an awful, *awful* bore! Well, Amelia, how are you to-day? How do, Seymour?"

"I am very much out of sorts," Mr. Seymour was beginning; but his wife broke in, before he had half finished his sentence, with—

"Harry, what are you doing in London at this time of year? I thought you never, by any chance, came up before May."

"Oh, yes, I do!" answered Barrington, looking a little annoyed. "Of course I do. Why, I am always coming up to have my hair cut—and things. I want to introduce you to Mademoiselle de Mersac, who is staying with Aunt Susan. Seymour, let me introduce you to Mademoiselle de Mersac."

Mr. Seymour made a clutch at his hat. He was a little, woebegone, colourless man, with watery blue eyes and thin whiskers, which hung dejectedly down from his hollow cheeks.

"You must find this climate very trying, coming from the warm south," he said, in a plaintive, sing-song voice.

Mrs. Seymour, tall, hook-nosed, lackadaisical, and very expensively dressed, said nothing, except, "How do you do?" and stood, with her head on one side, leaning lightly against the area railings. What Mrs. Seymour was thinking was, "This will never, never do! What can Aunt Susan be thinking of to let Harry go driving about with that too lovely girl! And he who is so susceptible too! This must be put a stop to at once."

And then the door was opened, and they all went into the house together.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXV.

In which Barrington Displays much Tact.

"Well, Amelia," said Miss Barrington, as she took her place at the head of the luncheon table, "and how are you? Very ill, I suppose, eh?"

"Thank you, I have been particularly well lately—for me," answered Mrs. Seymour, in a feeble, drawling voice. "I am not free from pain, of course; but that is nothing. You, I know, never believe in anybody's being ill unless they have small-pox, or typhus fever, or something of that kind."

"*I* have been miserably seedy the last few days," began Mr. Seymour, but nobody noticed him; so he sighed, and relapsed into silence.

"Well, you know, Amelia," Miss Barrington was saying, "I have always maintained that imagination has more to do with most illnesses than is generally supposed. I have noticed that people who haven't time to be ill always manage to keep in good health. Look at statesmen, and judges, and barristers in large practice, for instance. You never hear of one of them being kept to his room, unless it is by a touch of the gout."

"Oh, but they are picked men, you know; otherwise they would not be where they are," protested Mr. Seymour.

"Perhaps so; but that would not prevent them having occasional colds, and headaches, and so on, like the rest of the world. They don't think about them, that's all. Don't you know that it is an acknowledged fact that by fixing your whole mind upon your little finger for an hour, you can make it ache most horribly? And then everybody has heard of the man who was taken into what they told him was the cholera ward in the hospital, and who incontinently took the cholera, and died, though there had not been a single case of it in the town up to that time. And there was the man whom they bled to death at Berlin, by blindfolding him, pricking his arm with a pin, and letting drops of warm water trickle slowly down it, assuring him, all the time, that he was gradually sinking. Never mind, Amelia, don't be offended. Have a mutton-chop."

"No, thank you" (with a slight shudder).

"Curry, then? Oh, no, of course you can't eat curry. Ernest, will you see if there is anything on the table that your wife can eat."

"I really—I am afraid—it's of no consequence, you know, but——" stammered Mr. Seymour, deprecatingly.

"My dear Ernest, don't apologise. Ring the bell, Harry, and we will order something suitable for invalids. What shall it be, Amelia? Beef-tea?"

"Oh, *dear* no, thank you," murmured Mrs. Seymour, with half-closed eyes. "I have not been able to stand beef-tea for months. Pray don't trouble about me."

Digitized by Google

"Well, you can't live without nourishment of some sort or kind," observed Miss Barrington. "Tapioca pudding?—toast-and-water?—gruel?—Du Barry's Revalenta Arabica?—Cockle's pills?—only tell us what you are accustomed to sustain life upon, and I have no doubt Bloomsbury will be able to produce it in a quarter of an hour."

Finally Mrs. Seymour said she thought she could manage a cup of tea and a biscuit; and then Miss Barrington turned to Jeanne.

"So you have been out for a walk already, I hear," said she. "Where did Harry pick you up? At the police-station, as he predicted?"

"No; it has not been quite so bad as that," answered Jeanne, smiling; "but I have been very much frightened, and I shall never walk out in London alone again. I lost my way almost immediately, and found myself in a terrible part of the town, where they stole my purse and tried to steal Turco, and from which I should never have escaped, I believe, if it had not been for——"

"Harry, of course," interrupted Miss Barrington, with one of her short laughs.

"No; a ragged little boy—or man—I could not say which he was, who showed me the way back to a street where there were cabs, and then ran off, without waiting to be paid. I told him to call here this afternoon, because I had lost my purse, and had nothing to give him; but Mr. Leigh thinks he will not come."

"I don't know," said Barrington, reflectively. "Having already possessed himself of your purse, he may very probably feel a hankering after your watch also. I should say he will turn up, as likely as not, in the course of the day, keep you engaged in interesting conversation, while he slips any little articles of value that may happen to be lying handy into his pocket, and takes a few mental notes of the arrangements of the house, so that he and some fellow-ruffians may the more easily make their way into it to-morrow night, and empty the plate-chest."

"All right," said Miss Barrington. "Let him show himself here, and he shall be handed over to the police."

"Then I hope he will not come," said Jeanne. "I should be sorry to get him into trouble. I dare say he is a thief, but I don't think it was he who tried to steal Turco; and could you expect any boy to be honest, living in that terrible place? It made me feel quite ill only to see it, and to breathe the air."

"No!—did it?" exclaimed Mr. Seymour, eagerly. "How did it make you feel? A sort of swimming in the head, and then a trembling about the knees, and then a dreadful access of nausea? Was that it? Now this is very interesting; because I experienced precisely the same sensations myself, some years ago, when an old school-fellow of mine, who has a living in the East of London, insisted upon taking me into some of the courts and alleys of his parish. It was really too horrible! Nothing but a strong effort of will kept me from fainting away; and

Digitized by Google

when we got out, I said at once—'My dear fellow,' I said, 'here's ten pounds; and when you want more, you know, I shall always be delighted to help you to the best of my poor ability. But you must never expect me to do this again—you really must not.' And then I went home, and was exceedingly unwell all night. It is curious how anything in the form of a bad smell upsets me directly. I recollect once—it was very awkward—I was walking with a lady in Rome, and we came to a place where they were cleaning out a sewer. I simply turned my head away, and was violently sick. I apologised, of course, and felt dreadfully ashamed of myself; but really it was no fault of mine."

"How very unpleasant! I wish you would reserve these charming reminiscences for some time when one does not happen to be eating, Ernest," said Miss Barrington.

Whereupon Mr. Seymour meekly begged pardon, and said no more. He was accustomed to snubs from all quarters, and did not much mind them now.

"You have not told us yet where you met Harry," said Mrs. Seymour, suddenly straightening herself up in her chair. And Jeanne wondered why this languid, die-away lady should look at her so oddly.

"I do not know where it was," she replied. "It was in a street—or rather in a sort of dirty little *place*——"

"Seven Dials, Amelia, if you insist upon accuracy," put in Barrington.

"And I was talking to Mr. Leigh, whom I had just met, and wondering how I should get back here. And then Mr. Barrington came up; and so we took a street-carriage, and returned."

"I see," said Mrs. Seymour, drily, and sank back in her chair again. She could not have said "I disapprove" more plainly.

Nobody spoke for a minute; and then Miss Barrington broke the silence by asking Jeanne if she was fond of music, "because," said she, "I took three tickets some time ago for a concert that is to be given to-day, meaning them for you and myself, and for anybody else who might turn up—Harry, perhaps. And now I don't see how I can possibly contrive to go there, for I must be five miles away from St. James's Hall at half-past four. But I should like you to go, if it could be managed. It will be something for you to do, and there will be some really good music. Harry, I wish you would take Mademoiselle de Mersac."

"I should like nothing better," answered Barrington. But he could not help looking a little surprised; and Mrs. Seymour's forehead became lined with horizontal wrinkles.

"Don't make faces, Amelia dear," said Miss Barrington, quietly. "Of course I meant that you should go too."

"*I* go to a concert! My *dear* Aunt Susan! *Really!*"

Mrs. Seymour's voice rang out quite clear and strong, so deep was her sense of the want of common feeling implied in such a proposition

Digitized by Google

"Then Ernest shall go."

A deprecating murmur from Mr. Seymour died away unheeded.

"Yes, that will be the best plan. Somebody really must go, you know; it would be absurd to pay for three tickets and never use them. Ernest, my dear fellow, it will do you all the good in the world. You will enjoy yourself immensely once you are in the concert-room. You shall be driven there in the carriage, and you can keep both the windows up, if you like; and when you arrive there, you know, you can roll yourself up in great-coats and rugs and things; and I have got an old black velvet skull-cap upstairs, which used to belong to my father, and which I will lend you for the afternoon. Altogether, I think you will have quite a treat. The carriage will be round in a quarter of an hour, Mademoiselle Jeanne, so if you want to change your dress, we will excuse you."

Jeanne took advantage of this permission; and when she came down stairs again, she found the small party assembled in the drawing-room. Mrs. Seymour was lying on a sofa, with her eyes closed. Her husband, carefully wrapped up, was looking dismally out of the window; and Barrington was holding a whispered colloquy with his aunt.

"Now you may as well make a start," said the latter, briskly. "Good-bye, all of you; and I shall expect you at dinner, remember, Harry." And so the trio went downstairs. But just as they were leaving the house, Miss Barrington's voice was heard again, from the landing, calling, "Harry! Harry!"

"What's the matter, Aunt Susan?"

"I only wanted to remind you that, in case Ernest faints during the performance, there is a nice pump on the cab-stand outside—quite handy."

"I must confess," observed Mr. Seymour, with a somewhat heightened colour, as the carriage drove away from the door, "that I find it a little difficult to be amused by your aunt's jokes. They may be very funny, but I am unable to see it. Perhaps, though, that may be because I am too advanced in life; for her pleasantries always strike me as being, like the grammars and atlases one sees advertised, specially adapted for the use of schools."

And with this mild shaft of sarcasm, the ill-used Ernest leant back upon the carriage-cushions, and fell into a moody silence. Only once in the course of the afternoon did he address Jeanne again, and that was to recur to the same subject.

"I am very glad Miss Barrington is not with us," he said. "If she had been, I should hardly have been able to stand this heat and noise. She means well; but really her ways of going on are too, *too* trying to the nerves. Amelia and I think it our duty to go and see her occasionally; but I can assure you that the duty is a most painful one to me."

Poor Mr. Seymour had been ridden over rough-shod by Miss Barrington ever since his marriage. He had never attempted to withstand her,

Digitized by Google

and only sometimes, if he were goaded beyond endurance, took refuge in flight from her presence. Amelia, however, was somewhat less submissive; and was, indeed, at this very moment, engaged in taking the terrible Aunt Susan to task in a tone which her husband would never have dared to use.

"I think it is foolish, Aunt Susan," she was saying. "Of course you can do as you like; but if you ask my opinion, I must give it, and I think it is foolish."

"I don't remember having asked your opinion, my dear."

"You asked me what I thought of the girl."

"Yes; and you said she was pretty. 'Pretty,' indeed! Why she is simply one of the most beautiful creatures I ever saw in my life! And upon the strength of her being 'pretty,' you proceed to call me a fool for having her in the house."

"I never said that, Aunt Susan. I said I thought it foolish to let her drive about London alone with Harry. And I think so still."

Mrs. Amelia had a good supply of quiet obstinacy always at command. As she fell back upon the sofa-cushions, and shut her eyes, there came a certain look into her face which Miss Barrington knew well, and which convinced her that further argument would be thrown away upon this stubborn invalid.

"Well, well," she said, "it is not a matter of any very great importance. I don't suppose either of them can have got much harm from driving in a hansom from St. Giles's to Bedford Square."

"Oh, no, very likely not. Only I think, for the girl's own sake, that it is a pity to allow that kind of thing to go on. And Harry is so impulsive."

"Not he, my dear! Susceptible he may be; but if ever there was a man who habitually looked before he leaped, that man is your brother. A little more impulsiveness would do him no harm."

"Well, Aunt Susan, I can do no more than warn you. If any trouble comes of this——"

"Now, Amelia, I am not going to be lectured. I like having beautiful things and beautiful people about me; and I don't see why I shouldn't gratify my taste when I can—and that is not every day, let me tell you. Harry is old enough to take care of himself; and as for Mademoiselle de Mersac, she is engaged to be married. So you see there is no necessity for your fretting yourself into an illness on account of either of them."

"Oh, well, if she is engaged, that is another thing. But are you quite sure about it?"

"Perfectly sure. I am not such a fool as I look, my good Amelia; and I should have thought you might have known me better than to suppose that I should take up so dangerous a pastime as match-making at my time of life."

This speech was a trifle disingenuous; but it had the desired effect of

Digitized by Google

quieting Mrs. Seymour, who, shortly after this, fell asleep on her sofa, and was left, without any ceremony, by her hostess.

Late that same evening, when Barrington, who had dined in Bedford Square, and had spent a long time in the drawing-room after dinner, had at last said "Good-night," Miss Barrington took Jeanne's breath away by saying abruptly, and without any introductory observations—"If I were you, I should throw over that Frenchman."

"I cannot," answered Jeanne, in an odd, despairing sort of tone. She had been taken by surprise, and spoke as she would hardly have done if she had had a moment of warning; but the other did not notice—or, at all events, did not seem to notice—anything unusual in her manner.

"Oh, dear me, yes, you can," she rejoined. "I'll tell you what you can't do: you can't get rid of a man when once you are married to him—unless, of course, he beats you, and runs away with somebody else's wife, and even then your Church won't set you free of him. Well, it's no business of mine. Good-night, my dear."

And so this imprudent old woman went off to bed, having succeeded in sowing such a crop of disturbing thoughts as effectually banished sleep from her guest's pillow for the best part of the night.

Barrington went to his club, and finding Mr. Leigh, as he had expected, in the smoking-room, threw himself down in an easy-chair beside that good-natured gentleman, and said—"Leigh, old chap, I want you to come with me to Kew Gardens to-morrow."

"*Good* Lord! Kew Gardens! What on earth for? What do they keep in Kew Gardens? Monkeys and things?"

"Upon my word, Leigh, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. If you never saw the hothouses at Kew, it is high time that you should be shown them. I am going there to-morrow, with my aunt and Mademoiselle de Mersac, and you shall come too, and make up the *partie carrée*."

"No, I won't—I'll be hanged if I will!" returned Mr. Leigh, with some warmth. "Why the deuce should I be put to stew for hours in a greenhouse with an old woman, because you want to carry on one of your interminable flirtations? You may look out for somebody else, I'm not going with you."

"Now, now, Leigh, don't be rude, and don't lose your temper. It will open your mind to see the Gardens; and as for my aunt, she is universally admitted to be one of the most entertaining old ladies in England."

"Hate old ladies, and don't want my mind opened," returned Leigh, concisely, blowing out a cloud of smoke, and watching it drift slowly upwards. "How abominably badly ventilated this room is!"

"Yes, it is unhealthy; and you are here a great deal too much. A little suburban air would do you no end of good. Come now, old man, you might as well be accommodating for once."

"Dash it all! I'm always being accommodating; and precious little thanks I get! Now look here, Barrington; if I go with you to that

Digitized by Google

confounded place to-morrow, I shall expect you to leave me in peace afterwards. I am not going to be let in for this kind of thing again. I shouldn't mind putting myself to inconvenience for a fellow who was awfully hard hit, and wanted a chance of getting a few words alone with a girl, every now and then; but that isn't your case at all. You have been spending whole days with Mademoiselle de Mersac ever since she came to England. There was nothing on earth, that I can see, to have prevented your proposing to her last winter, in Algiers; there is nothing to prevent your proposing to her now. But I don't believe you ever will. You prefer to hang on and hang on, settling nothing, and making everybody uncomfortable; and, one of these fine mornings, you'll find the young lady will marry some one else; and then you'll raise a tremendous hullabaloo, and swear she's deserted you, and broken your heart. I call that sort of thing simply sickening."

"Ah! but you don't quite understand," observed Barrington, placidly.

And then Mr. Leigh, who was not in the best of tempers, got up, crossed the room, and sat down beside another man.

He kept his promise of joining the party to Kew Gardens on the following day; but he did not, in the sequel, prove true to the determination he had expressed of taking part in no more such expeditions. An appeal to his good nature and friendship was generally enough to send him sighing off to the Crystal Palace, to Richmond Hill, to half-a-dozen places which, at that time of year, were not very attractive in themselves, and for which poor Leigh, then and there, conceived a hatred which time has never been able to efface.

But the services of this faithful friend were not demanded every day. Barrington was a man of many resources and a very large acquaintance, and, by the aid of one stratagem or another, contrived not only to secure a chaperon for Mademoiselle de Mersac during her daily wanderings, but also to provide that chaperon with a more or less suitable companion. Thus privacy was insured, propriety respected, and the cavillings of Amelia stifled in their birth. By a triumph of diplomacy, Amelia herself was made use of upon more than one occasion. It was Amelia who sat, for over an hour, beside Miss Barrington, at the Exhibition of Old Masters, talking about the disputed causes of atrophy, while her brother and Jeanne were at the other end of the gallery, not looking at the pictures at all. It was Amelia again who mounted guard over the same couple during a long wet afternoon in Bedford Square, when Miss Barrington was, as usual, out, and who allowed her attention to be entirely taken off her duties by the conversation of a German physician—a most interesting man, whom Harry had known, some years back, on the Continent, and whom he had thoughtfully invited to meet his sister. Mr. Seymour, too, had to take his share of escort duty, as had many others, none of whom—be it said to the credit of Barrington's adroitness—ever imagined that they were acting in obedience to any other will than their own.

Digitized by Google

Jeanne, at all events, for one, had no idea of the schemes and plots that were required to bring about those long and delightful interviews with Barrington to which she looked forward every morning on waking, and remembered regretfully every night before going to sleep. Everything seemed to fall out quite naturally in the manner most agreeable to her; everybody appeared determined that the few days, or weeks, of her stay in London should be made as pleasant for her as possible; her hostess was kindness itself, and Barrington was as devoted as a man could be. It was a cheerful, busy, novel kind of life to her, and she would have been perfectly happy in it, for a time, if only she could have managed to banish all memory of Saint-Luc from her mind.

Meanwhile the natural termination of this little comedy was drawing nearer day by day, and it came at last, as such terminations often do, somewhat abruptly and without any premeditation on the part of the chief actor. It fell out that, on a certain frosty, starry evening, Barrington and Jeanne found themselves at the entrance of the famous Long Walk in Windsor Park. Under the protection of Mr. and Mrs. Seymour, who by skilful strategy had been cajoled into braving the risks of the expedition, they had been spending the day in the royal borough. They had duly visited the state apartments of the Castle; they had surveyed the wide prospect of river, town, and meadow from the terrace; they had attended the afternoon service at St. George's; and now Barrington had at last persuaded his sister and her husband to seek the warmth and repose which they so much needed in an hotel before setting out upon the return journey to London. There would be just time before the train left for Mademoiselle de Mersac to get a glimpse of the Great Park, and she certainly ought not to leave Windsor without seeing it. As for its being pitch dark, that did not signify in the least; starlight was rather an advantage to winter scenery. So Jeanne received a reluctant permission to go; and she and her escort were soon standing, with the Castle at their backs, facing the long vista and the equestrian statue at the end of it. That triumph of the sculptor's art was barely distinguishable in the darkness; but the straight line of the three-mile avenue, with its row of elms on either side, was clear enough; and Jeanne endeavoured to express that admiration of its effect which she supposed was expected of her.

"It is magnificent in summer, I have no doubt," said she, with an upward glance at the bare boughs which were swaying and creaking with the rising wind; "but do you not think it is a little melancholy now?"

"Melancholy? Well, yes, I daresay it is rather," answered Barrington, absently. His thoughts were not in the Long Walk at that moment.

"For myself, I am not very fond of avenues at any time," resumed Jeanne. "I like much better the winding roads of your English parks, which generally manage to keep you out of sight of the house till you are close upon it. There is something rather depressing in driving for

Digitized by Google

three miles in a straight line, with the object of your drive before you all the time, and growing bigger and bigger as you approach it. One feels as though one had a task to accomplish, and one longs to get to the end of it. In France there is hardly a château but has its avenue; not so long as this, certainly, still long enough, very often, to seem interminable. Most of them are bordered by lime trees, but some have poplars, which is terrible. It is impossible to imagine anything more gloomy than a French château during the autumn and winter. Most of us, you know, do not make our homes in the country, as you do. It is only those who cannot afford to go away who remain on their estates all the year round; and when the summer is over, and their guests have gone away, they usually dismiss a number of their servants. Then the avenue is deep with fallen leaves, which nobody takes the trouble to sweep away; at the end of it is the house, generally half shut up; everything is silence, and sleep, and decay. I do not know how I could bear to live in such a place!" she concluded, with a shudder.

Barrington had never been told before that M. de Saint-Luc was the owner of a château; but he felt sure of it now.

"I don't think," said he, "that you ever will live in such a place."

"How can you tell?"

"At all events, nothing obliges you to do so."

She made no reply.

"Where would you like best to live—in England or in Algeria? What I should prefer would be to spend the summer and autumn, and perhaps just a little bit of the winter, in England; then to go to Algiers, and remain there till May, when it would be time to do a few weeks of Paris and London."

"Yes, that would be perfect."

"I should think it perfect if you were with me."

These last words were spoken in a very low voice—not too low, however, to reach their destination; for Barrington was standing very close to Jeanne at the time, and as he stopped speaking, his hand somehow found its way into hers. And so, for a couple of seconds or so, they remained, neither of them showing any inclination to speak. Then Jeanne started, and drew back.

"We shall miss the train. Let us go," she said, in a rather unsteady voice.

"Not till you have told me with your own lips that you love me, Jeanne—not till you have promised that we shall never part again in our lives, and that you will not allow anyone or anything to come between us any more."

The floodgates of Barrington's speech were loosed now, and set free a torrent of glib words. Having at last made up his mind to speak plainly, he appreciated to the full the exquisite pleasure of pouring his love-tale into Jeanne's own ears; and, as he was not hampered by any of the doubts which usually impede the eloquence of lovers, his avowal

Digitized by Google

progressed without any hitch, and was quite a model of poetical and graceful diction. It was all such plain sailing! Long ago he had been perfectly well aware, in his heart, that Jeanne loved him; it only remained now for him to declare his own passion; and, as he did so, he could see, even in that dim light, that her face softened, that a smile hovered about her lips—he almost thought he could detect a gathering moisture in her eyes.

Great, then, were his astonishment and consternation at the answer which fell upon his ears when he had finished speaking.

"Mr. Barrington," said Jeanne, in her gravest and most composed manner, "I am very grateful to you for all the kind things you have said, but what you wish for cannot be. It is impossible."

Had her suitor been a little less prolix, she would probably have replied to him after a different fashion; but he had given her time to think, and to remember both her engagement to Saint-Luc and its cause.

"You forget that I am not free," she said.

"Is that all? Is it only that?"

"It should have been enough, I think, to prevent you from speaking as you did just now."

"Oh, but that is ridiculous—it really is. I know that you are engaged, in a sort of a way, to that fellow, but I also know that you don't care a brass farthing for him; and you are not yet married to him, thank God! If you do not love me, you have only to say so, and no harm will have been done; but if you do, you will be inflicting the greatest injury in your power upon me and upon yourself—yes, and upon Saint-Luc too—by concealing it."

Barrington's tone was hardly that of a suppliant. All his life long it had been his habit, if he did not at once get what he wanted, to order it rather than beg for it; and he was displaying this tendency now more plainly than he was aware of.

Jeanne, however, scarcely noticed this, being fully taken up with her own perplexity and trouble. In her heart she was rather of Barrington's opinion, and was inclined to think that she ought to tell him all the truth; but then there was that unfortunate debt of Léon's which must be spoken of first, and, at the moment, she could not bring herself to do this. So, having no words at command by means of which she might make Barrington understand that she wanted time to think before giving him a direct answer, she cut the knot of the difficulty in a very simple manner. She turned, and walked back towards the town as fast as she could go.

Barrington could only follow her; and, as he caught her up, he did manage to whisper a few pleas and remonstrances. But she answered never a word, and he soon subsided into silence; for how is it possible to make love while hurrying, at the rate of a good four miles an hour, through streets illumined by gas-lamps and lighted shop-windows, and

Digitized by Google

tolerably full of foot passengers? Barrington gave it up; but he was highly incensed, and not at all inclined to put up with the scolding which his sister was even now rehearsing in anticipation of his return to the White Hart.

"Really this is *too* bad!" cried that injured lady, when the delinquents made their appearance. "Harry, are you aware that you have made us miss the train, and that we shall very likely have to stay here all night, without so much as a hair-brush or a clean collar among us?"

"Nonsense, Amelia. There is another train in half an hour, and you will be home by dinner-time. Don't make a fuss about nothing."

Mrs. Seymour was scared into silence by the unexpected sternness of this rejoinder; but when she was once more at home with her husband, she expressed her opinion of Barrington's behaviour in no measured terms.

"I believe he made us late purposely," she said; "and as for that horrid girl, I shall not be taken in by her a second time. This morning she was trying to make friends with me, and I really began to think that I had done her an injustice, and was sorry I had written to the Ashleys about it all. But now I am very glad that I did; and I do hope that they will manage between them to bring Harry to his senses."

Digitized by Google

What the English have done for the Indian People.

II.

In the Cornhill of last month I glanced at some of the results of British administration in the rural parts of India. We saw how our countrymen in the last century found the Indian frontier laid waste by constant invasions, the interior districts of India ravaged by armies of banditti, ten millions of its people swept away by a single famine, and one-third of its most fertile province, Bengal, given over to jungle and wild beasts. We saw how British rule has changed this state of things; how it has established a secure frontier and put an end to invasion from without; how it has extirpated or won over to honest industry the swarms of banditti within; how it has done battle with famine; how the jungle has been reclaimed; how the wild beasts have been killed off, and many thousand square miles added to the food-producing area of the world. As regards the great primary duty of a civilised government—namely, the protection of its subjects—we have only to look around us in India to see how our countrymen have discharged their task. The outward and visible changes justify us in saying that British rule in India means security instead of invasion, order in place of anarchy, instead of perpetual internal wars a profound internal peace. It means a vast population dwelling in safety in provinces formerly desolated by man and abandoned to wild beasts.

I now invite your attention to some of the less obvious results of British rule. Foremost among such results is the development of new industries and the growth of great centres of trade. Commercial cities, in our sense of the word, did not exist in ancient India. The capital was the standing camp of the monarch; its trade depended upon the presence of the court. Magnificent emperors required magnificent cities around them, and an inconsiderate or a tyrannical prince ordered the movements of the citizens, as he ordered the movements of his troops. One cruel emperor of the house of Tughlak forced the whole inhabitants of Delhi, in the north of India, to migrate to his new capital Doulatabad, 700 miles away in the distant south. Thousands perished on the road. The king twice changed his mind. Twice he allowed the miserable people to return to Delhi; twice he compelled them on pain of death to leave it. One of these forced migrations took place during a famine; a great part of the citizens died of hunger; the rest were utterly ruined. But, says the historian, "the emperor's orders were strictly complied with, and the ancient capital was left desolate."

A large external trade was indeed an impossibility at the native

Digitized by Google

metropolis Delhi, which lay more than a thousand miles from the river's mouth. But even the capitals of the seaboard provinces were chosen for military purposes, and with small regard to the commercial capabilities of their situation. Thus in Lower Bengal the Muhammadans under different dynasties fixed in succession on six towns as their capital. Each of these successive capitals was on a river bank; but not one of them possessed any foreign trade, nor indeed could have been approached by an old East Indiaman. They were simply the court and camp of the king or the viceroy for the time being. Colonies of skilful artisans settled round the palaces of the nobles to supply the luxurious fabrics of oriental life. After the prince and court had in some new caprice abandoned the city, the artisans remained, and a little settlement of weavers was often the sole surviving proof that the decaying town had once been a capital city. Thus the exquisite muslins of Dacca and the soft silks of Murshidábád still bear witness to the days when these two places were successively the capital of Bengal. The artisans worked in their own houses. The manufactures of India were essentially domestic industries, conducted by special castes, each member of which wove at his own hereditary loom, and in his own village or homestead.

One of the earliest results of British rule in India was the growth of great mercantile towns. Our rule derived its origin from our commerce, and from the first the East India Company's efforts were directed to creating centres for maritime trade. Other European nations, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes, and the French, had preceded us as merchants and conquerors in India, and each of them had in turn attempted to found great seaports. The long Indian coast, both on the east and the west, is dotted with decaying villages which were once the busy scenes of those nations' early European trade. Of all their famous capitals in India, not one has now the commercial importance of Gravesend or Greenock, and not one of them has a harbour which would admit at low tide a ship drawing 20 feet.

The truth is that it is far easier to pitch a camp and erect a palace, which, under the native dynasties, was synonymous with founding a capital, than it is to create a great centre of trade. Such centres must grow of themselves, and cannot be called suddenly into existence by the fiat of the wisest autocrat. It is in this difficult enterprise, in which the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes, and the French had successively failed, that the British in India have succeeded. We make our appearance in the long list of races who have ruled that splendid empire, not as temple-builders like the Hindus, nor as palace and tomb builders like the Musalmáns, nor as fort-builders like the Mahrattas, nor as church-builders like the Portuguese, but in the more commonplace capacity of town-builders, as a nation that had the talent for selecting sites on which great commercial cities would grow up, and who have in this way created a new industrial life for the Indian people.

Digitized by Google

Calcutta and Bombay, the two commercial capitals of India, are essentially the creations of British rule. Shortly after Bombay was ceded by the Portuguese to the British Crown in 1661, as part of the dower of the wife of Charles II., the king was glad to hand over his unprofitable acquisition, which was then considered the grave of Europeans, to a company of London merchants, for an annual payment of 10*l.* in gold. Bombay city has now close on three-quarters of a million of inhabitants living entirely by commerce. It ranks next to London (if we except Calcutta and its municipal suburbs) in the cities of the British Empire. Its population is nearly one-and-a-half times that of Glasgow or Liverpool, and nearly double that of Manchester or Birmingham.

The history of Calcutta, the metropolis of India, is still more striking. Together with its municipal suburbs, it has a population exceeding three-quarters of a million, or nearly double that of any city in Great Britain except London. Less than two centuries ago, when our countrymen first settled at Calcutta, they were a poor band of fugitive merchants seeking shelter from the extortions of the native rulers of Bengal; and the future city of palaces consisted of three clusters of mud huts on the river bank.

It was not their first attempt to found a city where they could trade in peace. The sea face of Bengal was the scene of many an earlier and unsuccessful effort. Sometimes the English were driven away by the exactions of the native general in charge of the surrounding district; sometimes the river on which their little town was rising shifted its course, and left their wharves high and dry; sometimes the estuary which they had fixed upon as a harbour silted up, and long banks of sand rose between their port and the sea. Calcutta on the eastern coast of India, and Bombay on the west, are the results of a long and patient series of unsuccessful efforts. They represent the survival of the fittest, and many an English heart was broken, and many a fortune was lost, in attempting to found sea-ports at the mouths of silting rivers, and amid the dismal Bengal swamps, before Calcutta rose to its proud position next to London, as the metropolis of India and the second city of the British Empire.

In one of these deserted seats of the early British trade I have seen the husbandman driving his plough over what were once the wet docks, and turning up spars and rotten fragments of sloops from the furrows. Others of these old towns have entirely disappeared from the map. For example, the harbour on the Orissa seaboard, which was officially reported, as late as 1809, to be the safest and most frequented port on that coast, has now ceased to exist. The mouth of the river has so completely silted up, and is so perfectly concealed by a dense fringe of jungle, that it is almost impossible for a strange vessel sailing down the coast to discover it. A similar ruin, has, in a milder degree, fallen on all the ancient seaports of India. The silt-bearing rivers and the sand-charged

Digitized by Google

currents of the ocean have built up impassable barriers of mud between the old historic harbours and modern commerce.

The same fate would long ago have overtaken Calcutta but for the strenuous efforts of our countrymen. The Húglí river, upon which Calcutta lies, forms one of the chief mouths of the Ganges, and has a course of about 120 miles from the point at which it diverges from the parent stream till it reaches the sea. No fewer than six great historical ports have been formed upon this river. The oldest of them, Satgaon, the ancient royal port of Bengal under the native dynasties, has been completely deserted by the navigable channel, and is now a thatched village crumbling upon the banks of a muddy ditch. The Dutch, the French, and the Danes each set up capitals and ports of their own on the Húglí river, off which vessels of the largest tonnage in the last century used to lie. Every one of these once famous emporiums is now blocked up by banks of sand and silt, and is unapproachable by sea-going ships at the present day.

Calcutta has been saved from the same fate by a system of river engineering which forms one of the most splendid triumphs in the contest of man with nature. The river Húglí has ceased to be the direct channel of the Ganges; but Calcutta alone, of all the successive river capitals of Bengal, has overcome the difficulties incident to its position as a deltaic centre of commerce. Strenuous efforts of engineering are required to keep open the three offshoots of the Ganges above Calcutta which combine to form the Húglí. Still greater watchfulness and more extensive operations are demanded by the 80 miles of the Húglí itself below Calcutta, to save it from the fate of other deltaic streams, and to prevent it from silting up. In 1853 the deterioration of the Húglí channel led to a proposal to found an auxiliary port to Calcutta on the Matlá, another mouth of the Ganges further east. A committee then appointed to inquire into the subject reported that "the river Húglí was deteriorating gradually and progressively." At that time "science had done nothing to aid in facilities for navigation," but since then everything has been effected which the foresight of modern engineering could suggest, or the power of modern capital could achieve. Observations on the condition of the Húglí channels are taken hourly, gigantic steam-dredgers are continually at work, and the shifting of the shoals is carefully recorded. By these means the port of Calcutta has been kept open for ships of the largest tonnage, drawing 26 feet, and almost seems to have outlived the danger which threatened its existence.

I have ventured to dwell at some length on the rise of our great industrial capitals in India. I have done so because the development of city life in India means the growth of a new industrial era for the people. Formerly, as we have seen, the industries of India were essentially domestic manufactures, each man working at his hereditary occupation, at his own loom or at his own forge. Under British rule a new era of industry in India has arisen—an era of industry on a great scale based

Digitized by Google

upon the co-operation of capital and labour, in place of the small household manufactures of ancient times. To us, who have from our youth grown up in the midst of a keen industrial civilisation, it is not easy to realise the change thus implied. I shall briefly indicate some of the most salient points of the revolution which it has wrought in the industrial life of the Indian people.

Under the old system of things in India, the entire population, with the exception of the hereditary artisan castes, had to make their living off the land. Practically every man who was not a soldier was a cultivator, and the entire population was crushed down upon the soil. Each house-father tilled his own little holding, and a universal system of small cultivation or *petite culture* existed in India. Now a universal system of "small cultivation" demands great foresight and self-restraint as regards the increase of the population. For it is clear that if ten acres are capable of supporting only one family in the present generation, they are not capable of supporting three or four families in the next. This has been clearly recognised in all European countries, such as Lombardy and southern France, where *petite culture* prevails. Travellers have frequently commented on the excessive thrift and penuriousness produced by this cause among the French peasantry. Both in France and Lombardy, and wherever small cultivation exists in Europe, severe restraints are self-imposed by the people on marriage and on the increase of the population. But in India the necessity for such restraints has never been recognised. On the contrary, very early marriages—at the age, say, of twelve to sixteen—form a sacred obligation on all Hindus, and economic considerations are not allowed to interfere with this religious duty. A son, in the native language *putra*, means literally he who *draws* or saves a man's soul, by a due performance of the funeral rites, from *put*, or hell; and every Hindu is anxious to get a son to perform this useful office at as early an age as possible. We have then in India a universal system of small holdings, without the economic and domestic restraints which alone render a system of small cultivation compatible with the well-being of a people.

In the last century, before the advent of British rule, the population of India was kept at a sufficiently low level by agencies quite independent of economic and domestic restraints. We saw in January's CORNHILL how invasions from beyond the frontier were annual events in the history of the Indian people until the English appeared upon the scene. We saw how armies of banditti ravaged the interior districts. We saw how famine played its awful part, in a single year sweeping away ten millions of inhabitants, and leaving a third of the most populous province of India bare of inhabitants, to relapse into jungle. We saw how tigers, elephants, and the great beasts of the tropics seized upon the lands thus relinquished by man, and added their own devastations to those of the sword and famine. Under British rule all these causes of depopulation have ceased. The people have multiplied at a rate which far out-

Digitized by Google

strips the food-producing power of the land. To take, for example, the best known of Indian provinces, Bengal, it is difficult to accept as sober facts, for an Asiatic country, the increase of population which successive estimates have disclosed. In 1787, the inhabitants of lower Bengal were estimated at 24,000,000; in 1802, at 30,000,000; by 1870, they were supposed to have increased at the utmost to 40,000,000. The census of 1872 suddenly disclosed an actual population of 63,000,000. In one night, in a single province of India we discovered 23,000,000 British subjects whose existence had never before been suspected. At this moment the population in many parts of Bengal is so dense that two persons have to live for the whole year off each acre of soil. In spite of the great uncultivable tracts of mountain, swamp, and half-formed deltaic land scarcely to be distinguished from sea, the pressure of the population per acre over all the lieutenant-governorship of Bengal is nearly double that of France per acre. The old restraints on population in India have disappeared under British rule. Foreign invasions have been sternly put an end to, internal wars have ceased; famine, although still retaining a terrible significance, is, in the old sense of the word, unknown in Bengal. The result is that the people have gone on increasing beyond the limit which the land in some provinces can support. Under the old system of things in India they would have died. Under the new system of things, brought about by British rule, they live, because they have found fresh outlets of industry, and the whole population of Bengal has no longer to subsist by the cultivation of the soil.

The great industrial cities of British India are the type of the new state of things implied by this change. In the old times the population of India had either to live by the tillage of the soil or to die. The country had reached what political economists of Mill's school called "the stationary stage" of civilisation. At this moment the people of India would be dying in almost every province from a permanent famine but for the new outlets afforded to them by the industrial life which our great Indian cities represent. Under native rule they simply reared the food-grains necessary to feed them from one harvest to another. If the food crops failed in any district, the local population had no capital and no other crops wherewith to buy food from other districts; so, in the natural and inevitable course of things, they perished. Now the peasants of India raise other and far more profitable crops than the mere food-stuffs on which they live. When scarcity occurs, they have some capital to fall back upon, and, even when they have no savings of their own, a widely spread class of capitalists, known as the village money-lenders, are ready to advance to them the means of subsistence to be repaid from their next year's crops. The so-called "stationary stage" in India has disappeared, and the Indian peasant is keenly alive to each new demand which the market of the world may make upon the industrial capabilities of his country.

The exact meaning of these words may be gathered from a few ex-

Digitized by Google

amples. Until 1854, cotton was produced on a small scale in India, and the total value exported from the Bombay Presidency averaged, during the previous five years, only 2½ millions sterling. The American war gave rise to a sudden demand; and the cotton production of Bombay rushed up, till, in 1864, it touched the enormous value of 30⅓ millions sterling. That is to say, the Bombay export of this single crop sprang up from two to thirty millions in ten years. This vast amount of money went into the pockets of the cultivators, who, the moment that they had found a more profitable crop than their old food-stuffs, quickly began to cultivate it on a large scale. What the American war was to the Bengal peasant, the Russian war had been to the Bengal husbandman. The blockade of the Baltic ports put an end to Great Britain's supply of fibres from Russia during the Crimean campaign. Forthwith the Bengal peasant enormously increased his production of jute. In 1852–53, before the Crimean war, the whole export of jute from Bengal was about 100,000*l*. In 1872–73, it exceeded 4¼ millions sterling, an increase of fortyfold.

During the same period vast numbers of people from the overcrowded interior of Bengal had been drafted off to the border districts, which, till the British obtained the country, were left waste through fear of the wild frontier races. These peasants, instead of starving in their old densely populated homes, are now earning high wages on the tea plantations, and last year exported three millions sterling worth of tea.

All these are essentially rural industries, which owe their existence to the new commercial life developed by the great cities of India. Besides such rural industries, however, there are a number of manufactures and productions which more especially appertain to the industrial life of great towns. Coal-mines have been discovered in several provinces, and now employ tens of thousands of miners. Mills and steam factories have followed the opening up of the coal-fields. Twenty-six years ago there was not a single loom worked by steam-power in India. There are now 1¼ million spindles employed in the cotton manufacture alone, and 40,000 spindles employed in the manufacture of jute.

In the last century, when the English became the ruling power in India, the country did not produce a million sterling a year of surplus products for exportation. During the first three-quarters of a century of our rule, the exports slowly rose to about six millions in 1830. During the half-century which has elapsed since that date, they have quickly multiplied by tenfold. Last year India sold to foreign nations 63 millions sterling worth of strictly Indian produce, which the Indian husbandman had reared, and for which he was paid. In 1877–78, the total trade of India, including exports and imports, exceeded 126 millions sterling.

These figures are so great, and the progress which they indicate so enormous, that they are almost beyond the grasp of the imagination. It may assist us in realising the change which they imply in the indus-

Digitized by Google

trial life of the people to glance at the history of two single ports. I shall first take the local harbour of a rural district, Akyab, in British Burma. In 1826, when we obtained the province in which it is situated, Akyab was merely a fishing village. Within four years, by 1830, it had developed into a little town, with a trade valued at 7,000*l*. In 1876, the trade exceeded 1⅓ millions sterling, so that between 1830 and 1876 the trade of Akyab has multiplied two-hundredfold in forty-six years. The only other example with which I shall detain you is one on a much larger scale. When we obtained Calcutta, it consisted of three mud-built hamlets without any trade whatsoever. After a century and a half of British rule, the total value of the sea-borne trade of Calcutta in 1820 was 10 millions sterling. In 1874, it had risen to over 54 millions sterling, besides 45 millions of trade with the interior, making a total commerce of 100 millions sterling a year at a town which had not ten pounds' worth of external trade when the British settled there.

I feel that I have taxed, perhaps too heavily, the reader's attention with so many figures. But it is impossible for any one to realise the progress which has been made in India under British rule without having the statistics placed before him. A new industrial life has been created for the people, vast outlets have been opened up for the productions of the country, and the increasing population, which must, under native rule, have been killed off or starved, can now earn a subsistence. The reader will perhaps pardon me for having wearied him with statistics when he remembers that those statistics mean a new industrial life for India—an industrial life which supersedes the sword of the invader and wholesale starvation by famine, in maintaining the balance between a population of small cultivators and the available land.

The effects of that new industrial life are not, however, confined to the great Indian cities. The new outlets for Indian staples have led to a rise in the price of the husbandman's crops, and in the value of the land on which they are grown. A hundred years ago there was more land in Bengal than there were cultivators to till it. Every proprietor tried to induce new tenants to come to his estate by offering them land at low prices. The neighbouring proprietors naturally objected to having their peasants thus tempted away. The manuscript records of the last century are full of such cases, in which one landholder seeks redress against another, and invokes the aid of the British authorities to bring back his tenantry from some adjoining estate. On every property there were two rates of rent—a high rate for the old tenants, and a low rate for the new ones. This state of things is exactly reversed under British rule. There are now more cultivators in Bengal than there is land for them to till; the competition is not among the landlords to procure tenants, but among the husbandmen to procure holdings. Two rates do indeed still exist; but the high rate is exacted from the new-comer, who is a mere tenant-at-will, and the low rate is paid by the old-established tenant, who has acquired occupancy rights under British rule.

Digitized by Google

There has, therefore, not only been a new industrial life created for the people, but there has also been a vast growth of rural rights in the soil. When we acquired Bengal, nothing corresponding to a system of rural courts existed. The Muhammadan officer collected the taxes, and ordered to prison, or to chains, or to mutilation, or to death, such criminals as might be brought before him, and who had not money to buy their release. A large proportion of the prisoners whom we found in gaol on the acquisition of Bengal had never received sentence of any sort; others were under order 'to remain during pleasure'—a legal formula of the Musalmâns which, translated into honest English, simply meant until the prisoners and their friends had been squeezed of their uttermost farthing.

The administration of civil justice was in a still worse condition. Civil courts had practically no existence. In some parts of the country the landlords simply issued their orders, and enforced obedience to them by means of their armed retainers. In others a rude system of arbitration by five men, or by the caste or the village community, settled disputes with the assistance of the diviner's rod, boiling oil, and various forms of trial by ordeal. Some English writers have fondly looked back to this native machinery for dispensing justice. As a matter of fact, no sooner did the English establish rural courts than the natives of Bengal gladly flocked to them, and their old devices of village arbitration and trial by ordeal fell into disuse. The first effort on a large scale to settle the rights of the people was made by Lord Cornwallis in 1793. His regulations supplied a Land Code of an imperfect sort. Immediately the newly established courts were flooded by innumerable demands to settle rural rights. During the next sixty years such rights had immensely outgrown the provisions of Lord Cornwallis's Code. A more complete land law was accordingly enacted in 1859, the year after India passed to the Crown; and again a vast number of new courts was required to deal with the multitudinous petitions to settle rural rights. There have been thus two great high tides of litigation in Bengal, immediately following our two great land laws of 1793 and 1859. The first land law of 1793 defined the rights of the native proprietors as against the State; the second great land law of 1859 defined the rights of the cultivators as against the proprietors.

What were formerly vague claims have thus been consolidated into marketable rights. The result is an enormous increase in the value of the land. In many districts, during the last century, the entire price of a field was the value of the crop upon it. In fertile deltas the price of land did not exceed two years' purchase. In the same districts it is now from ten to twenty years' purchase. It has been my duty to make inquiries in every province of India as to the interest which money yields. I find that for small loans to the cultivators the old native rate of 37½ per cent. per annum still prevails. But if any one has a landed property to pledge, he can borrow at less than one-third of that rate of

Digitized by Google

interest; and a native merchant of Calcutta who wishes to retire and purchase an estate thinks himself fortunate if he can invest in land yielding 8 per cent. clear per annum. Landed property, which in the last century was one of the most precarious possessions, has now become the most secure form of investment in India, precisely as it is at home. The growth of rural rights, and the increase in the value of land, have advanced side by side with the creation of a new industrial life, and with the opening up of fresh outlets for the productions of the country.

I think that I have now said enough to show what the English have done for the material progress of the Indian people. It is not necessary for me here to dwell on the more obvious and often-recited aspects of that progress, on the network of roads and railways which we have spread over India, on the canals by which we have multiplied and secured her internal resources, or on the spacious harbours by which we have brought these resources into the market of the world. All these and many other agencies of material progress are involved in the one great fact, the creation of that new industrial life which has taken place under British rule. But, before closing this paper, I should like to direct attention to a few of the moral aspects of that rule.

In the last century education in India was a monopoly in the hands of the priests—a power which they employed to subjugate the minds of the people. Under British rule, education in India has been taken entirely out of the hands of the priests, and it has become the great emancipator of the Indian races. In ancient India a Brahman was forbidden, on pain of death, to teach the sacred books to the masses. Under British rule, the State schools offer instruction to every one, and open the same careers to all. In the last century the Hindus were taught, from their earliest childhood, that they must remain imprisoned for life in the caste in which they were born. We have now two millions of boys and girls receiving public instruction in India. Under the British Government these two millions of native children are learning that every occupation and every profession is open to every boy on the benches of an Indian school. The rising generation in India have been freed from superstitious terrors, they have been led to give up cruel practices, they have learned to detest and despise their forefathers' bloody rites. Widow-burning, infanticide, hook-swinging, self-mutilation, and human sacrifice—these are a few familiar relics of the old bondage under which the Indian intellect groaned and the Indian heart bled. Great as has been the material progress of India during the past century, its emancipation from ignorance and priestcraft forms, to my mind, a far more splendid memorial of British rule. Truly the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Side by side with the stirring of the Indian intellect there has also been an awakening of the Indian races to a new political life. The old village communities of India, with their rural guilds and castes, and all the good and evil which those institutions implied, had lost their pristine vitality

Digitized by Google

before the commencement of the English rule. Their memories and their outward forms survived; but the life had been trodden out of them beneath the heel of the Musalmán taxgatherer and the hoofs of the Mahratta cavalry. The village institutions had ceased to be able to protect the peasantry from external oppression, or even to settle their disputes among themselves. Every attempt on a large scale to resuscitate the ancient village community has failed. For a time the English rulers were content to deplore this fact—a fact which, in reality, marks the advance of a race from a lower to a higher stage of social organisation. But during the past twenty-five years efforts have been made to develope a new political life in place of the old village guilds which had disappeared. The village has given place to the municipality in India. Before our own eyes we have seen the self-government, which the primitive village communities had ceased to give, develope into a higher form of self-government under municipal institutions. At this moment there are nearly one thousand municipalities in India, with a municipal population exceeding fourteen millions, and raising among themselves for local purposes a revenue of close on two millions sterling. There are also, in some of the provinces, district boards and rural unions, which do for the country what the municipalities do for the towns. The Indian races are visibly passing from the village into the municipal stage of social organisation, and the great lesson of local self-government is at this moment being learned by fourteen millions of native citizens.

But, as I said at starting, while much has been accomplished in India, much remains to be done; and it is in no vainglorious spirit that we should contrast what has been with what is. I have greatly valued this opportunity of addressing a large section of my countrymen; but if these pages should be interpreted to mean that we have already done all that we ought to do for India, I should be extremely sorry that they were ever written. I purpose hereafter to show what England has yet to do for the Indian people. At present I shall glance at only a single one of our many unfulfilled duties to India. To take the point which we have just been speaking of, the great question of self-government. I am one of those who believe that, both as a matter of expediency and of justice, the natives must be admitted not only to wider employment in administrative offices, but also to some share in the government of their country. I do not consider it either safe for England, or fair to India, that a people from whom fifty-eight millions of revenue were last year raised, should have no voice in the political direction of their affairs. I look forward to the time when the Indian Legislature will be, to some extent at any rate, elected by the people—to a time when there will be an Indian representative body, whether under the title of a Privy Council for India, or by whatsoever name it may be called, which shall assist the Viceroy in the task of administration, as his Legislative Council now assists him in the task of law-making.

But such a council is possible only if Great Britain makes up her

Digitized by Google

mind to deal honestly with the Indian people. For one of the first functions of an Elective Legislature or a Representative Council for India would be the supervision of the Indian finances. At present there is a wide-spread feeling among the natives that their revenues are sometimes dealt with in the interest not of India, but of England. While India has been struggling against deficits, and suffering under terrible famines, she has been deprived of an important source of taxation, not because that taxation was unpopular or pressed heavily on the Indian people, but because (to use the words of Professor Fawcett, whose sound free-trade principles no one will question) it was obnoxious to a great manufacturing interest here. During the same time the armies of India have been employed in Abyssinia, in the Mediterranean, and in Afghanistan, to carry out the policy of England, but not entirely at the English expense.

The moment that a Representative Council is created in India, this feeling of soreness and irritation on the part of the natives with regard to the Indian finances will find a voice. England, therefore, can grant representative institutions to India only if England is determined to deal honestly with India. I feel sure that the British nation has only to realise this fact in order to see that justice is done. Our history in India has been chequered by occasional mistakes, but on the whole it forms a splendid record of an empire fairly won, and honestly administered in the interests of the people.

W. W. HUNTER, LL.D.

Digitized by Google

An Arcadian Revenge.

"Depend upon it, my dear sir, there is a system of compensation: I, for example, occupy a position in the country beyond my talents, while you possess talents that are considerably above what is necessary—ahem—to a person of your condition of life."

This amazing speech was addressed to me confidentially in the smoking-room of our common club one night, by Mr. Dornoway-Dicke, after we had dined together for the first time. It was late in August; the club was empty, and I had invited him to join tables, though I knew him to be an ass, rather than dine alone. The bad man may take a solitary meal without moral damage, and even to the public advantage, since the custom is unwholesome, and tends to shorten life; but to the good man it is harmful. His thoughts, constant as the needle to the pole to what is pure and good, are naturally attracted to himself, and his benevolent actions, his excellent motives, his whole blameless career, pass in review before his eyes, and he becomes self-conscious and self-complacent. Rather than run the risk of this, having ordered my own modest repast, I looked up at Dornoway-Dicke, who, with his glass painfully fixed in his eye, was scanning the same "limited carte" for the day, in doubt (as I guessed) about the French dishes, and observed, "Shall we dine together?" and he had replied courteously, "Charmed, I am sure."

As a matter of fact Mr. Dornoway-Dicke was a man not easy to charm; it was not in Genius (though up to that date I don't think it had ever tried it) to do so; and I believe even Beauty herself would have failed in the attempt, unless she had had a title to back her.

Mr. Dicke's weakness was for a lord; a very common one, of course, but in his case unusually pronounced. His conversation was studded with titles as the firmament is with stars; and he was in respect to them what Mr. Carlyle, in relation to spiritual things, calls "terribly at ease in Zion;" that is, he was shockingly familiar with earls and viscounts, while as to baronets, he would refer to them by their Christian names. To say that his views upon all matters were common-place would have been flattering to his intelligence; they were conventional to sublimity.

"Ghost stories are absurd," argues Coleridge, "because, though men tell us they have had such an experience, if a man did really ever see what he actually believed to be a ghost, idiotcy would at once supervene;" but I firmly believe that Dornoway-Dicke would have seen a ghost without the least injury to his intellectual powers; not because he was already an idiot, but (independently of that) because so unconventional a subject as the supernatural had never entered his mind. If the ghost

Digitized by Google

had a title, then, indeed, an impression might have been made, but it would have been produced by his temporal not his spiritual lordship. In all matters which exercise the human mind, from theology to American bowls, he took not the faintest interest; but I had been informed—and warned—that upon the subject of the dignity and position of the Dornoway-Dicke family he could, and would, be very diffuse if you were not careful. He was a man in short to nod to, but not to speak with, unless the means of escape were handy. Still, late in August at a London club one cannot afford to be particular, and having such strong moral reasons for not dining alone, I had to dine with Dornoway-Dicke.

There was one circumstance, however, which really did attract me towards this gentleman, and made me wish for a closer acquaintance. It was a much debated question in the club whether he wore a wig or not, and I wanted to solve it. If he did do so (for even after dining with him I was not sure), they were the best wigs that ever were. I say wigs, because he must have had lots of them, for his hair was sometimes short and sometimes long, and sometimes just as it ought to be in the case of a fashionable young gentleman of fifty-four. For there was this disadvantage about the distinguished position of the Dornoway-Dicke family, that, being in the peerage—though it must be confessed in a very remote and "presumptive" fashion—the man's age was known to a nicety. There was then this point (as to his wig) to be cleared up, which promised me some little excitement, and I was also curious to know whether he talked of "the Land" as though it were alive, which I was assured he did. My information upon this point, as it turned out, was correct. The one supreme effort of originality which Mr. Dornoway-Dicke had made was to personify the landed interest in this peculiar fashion.

"What the Land wants, sir," he would observe very slowly and majestically (so that you had plenty of time to suggest to yourself "top-dressing," "coprolites," and what not), "what the Land wants, sir," he always repeated this charming phrase, "is fair play."

"The Land" wanted so many things in the course of our conversation at dinner, that I had begun to think it somewhat exacting, and indeed to get a little impatient of Mr. Dornoway-Dicke himself. But I am never, or at least hardly ever, discourteous, and though bored to extremity, like a wooden ship exposed to the action of the *teredo navalis*, I endured it as though I had been made of iron. I had asked the man to dinner, and in one sense had certainly paid for it, so felt constrained by the duties of hospitality to be civil till the meal was over. When it was finished and we repaired to the smoking-room I had no such scruple. "The Vine," says the classic author, "is the Evoker of Truth," and this is even still more the case with the Cigar. Imagine then my indignation at that amazing remark of my companion, "I, for example, occupy a position in the country beyond my talents; while you possess talents that are considerably above what is necessary—ahem—to a person of your condition in life."

"Pray," said I, "Mr. Dornoway-Dicke, confine your observations to yourself, as you generally do. As to your talents, I have no reason to

Digitized by Google

doubt your own modest estimation of them, but as to your position in the country I was not aware that you had any."

I hope this was not rude. I spoke in the gentlest tones of which the human voice—or at all events my voice—is capable, and in a manner that was certainly winning, for I felt that I had scored. To my astonishment Mr. Dornoway-Dicke remained quite unruffled; he carefully removed the ash from the end of his cigar with his signet ring, and answered quietly, almost humbly, "You quite mistake me. I said my position in *the country*, of which, as you tell me, you know nothing. You are not then familiar with Mangelwurzelshire?"

I was certainly not. I had heard of it of course, but I felt myself fortunate in not having to spell it.

"Ah, I thought so," he continued blandly. "You should come down to Dornoway Court and see me at home. Then you would understand why I don't oftener visit London. In town I am, comparatively speaking, nobody, but in Mangelwurzelshire—what do you say now to running down to us for the first week in September?"

Five minutes before I should have said "No" without the slightest hesitation; but the outrageous vanity of the man's manner tickled me to the core. I felt curious to see those natives of Mangelwurzelshire to whom Mr. Dornoway-Dicke appeared to be a person of importance, and moreover I had not yet discovered whether he wore a wig or not. "The worst part of a wig," says the old riddle, "as of love, is the parting;" but Mr. Dornoway-Dicke's parting was perfect, and so delicate that one would have almost said it had been effected by a female hand. Among the simpler inhabitants of Arcadia he might take less extreme precautions to deceive the public; and he certainly would not get his hair cut, if cut it ever was, so often. "I will come to Dornoway Court with pleasure," I said; and on the appointed day I went.

Important as my host's position in the country may be, it is not my intention to describe "Mr. Dornoway-Dicke at home," as though he were a public character. Suffice it to say, that he was better at home than abroad (or at least in London); and as his family were pleasant people and his house full of cheerful company, I did not regret my visit. The "Court," as he loved to call it, was however so peculiar that I must say a few words about it. It was the only edifice with which I am acquainted which gratified one's sense of humour. It was quite spick-and-span as respects newness, but built and furnished in the mediæval style. A gravel drive, rolled to perfection, led up to a frowning entrance, with a huge oaken portal in which was inserted a little hole barred with iron for purposes of espial. Through this the porter was supposed (though he never did it) to take cognizance of the approaching visitor, and if peaceful, to unbar the massive bolts of the great door to let him in. Everything in the house was apparently of the same epoch, but in reality about three years old. In the dining room was a fire-place as big as an ordinary parlour, and before which one would not have been surprised to see a pair of trunk hose airing, or a couple of jack boots. The sideboard, to

Digitized by Google

the modern and inartistic eye, resembled a kitchen dresser; while in the morning room was a spinning wheel with the flax in it, as though the thrifty housewife had just been called away from that occupation to superintend the construction of a venison pasty, or to issue orders for the entertainment of the company invited to the morrow's tournament.

These ridiculous objects, as I soon discovered, were designed to persuade the public that the Dornoway-Dickes themselves were mediæval, and had resided at the "Court" for the last six hundred years. Whereas, as a matter of fact, they were new comers. In the country, even though you are distantly connected with the peerage, this is a serious obstacle to "position," and the whole of my host's gigantic intellect was concentrated on attaining it. He had been "called upon" at once by everyone in the county within a circuit of twenty-five miles, except One. I write it reverentially with a capital O, for it was "The Duke." I am not of course speaking of the late Duke of Wellington; in Mangelwurzelshire, as in every other county, the duke was the duke who lived there; his Grace of Turniptops. This divinity was still a young man, unmarried, and not much given to call on anybody; and for three long years all the efforts of the Dornoway-Dickes had been unavailing to induce him to honour the "Court," with his august presence. Two months ago, however, he had sent his card by a mounted messenger, and one month ago, oh, joy of joys! he had accepted an invitation to a garden party at the house for one of the very days on which I was to remain its guest.

It was just after this gracious promise had been given that Mr. Dornoway-Dicke had made his appearance at the club, to make arrangements with Gunter; and now that I knew the circumstances, I was not only not surprised at the magnificence of his deportment on that occasion, but astonished that he should have been so affable as he was. My private impression is, that he asked me down to Dornoway Court not so much from personal affection, as to secure an additional witness to his social triumph; but that is neither here nor there. The Duke was coming, and the family were in a state of excitement rare, I should hope, in Hanwell, and not habitually exhibited even at Broadmoor.

The great subject of discussion among them for weeks had been, who was to be invited to meet the Duke? and it was not exhausted yet. Everybody—who was anybody—had been asked except the Titbats; and the knotty point that could not be settled was, whether these people should be asked or not. Captain and Mrs. Titbat were their immediate neighbours; their lawn-tennis grounds were in fact contiguous, and the two families, though not absolutely on a friendly footing, were well-known to one another. Young Titbat, when a player was wanting, had sometimes even been invited to make up the party at their favourite amusement; and when the balls went over the wire fence that separated the two domains, the juvenile Titbats did not pretend (as some young people would) that they were lost, but would honestly chuck them back again. Still the Titbats were not among the County Families, nor any-

Digitized by Google

thing like it. Their efforts—far more desperate than those of the Dornoway-Dickes—had miserably and utterly failed in that direction. It was not so much that their mansion was too small to be reckoned as a country house; that their paddock could not by any strain of courtesy be called a park; or that their ornamental lake was an undeniable pond. There was something amiss—I never could find out what—about Mrs. Titbat.

She was a woman—I once beheld her, and under circumstances I can never forget—of large proportions and hirsute aspect (indeed, she had a very respectable beard); her complexion was rubicund, and to the uncharitable might seem to indicate that she indulged in liquor, though I never heard that she did so. Whatever was wrong with her had happened so long ago that it would have been much better and kinder of her fellow-creatures to have forgotten it. My impression is, that instead of rushing into matrimony with the imprudence of most young couples, Captain Titbat and herself had exercised an unusual prudence, and had not got themselves indissolubly united till time and trial had shown them to be suited to one another.

However that might have been, Mrs. Titbat was not "visited," nor would the Dornoway-Dickes have dreamt of asking her to their garden-party except for that contiguity, to which I have referred, of their lawn-tennis grounds. The Duke, it was known, was devoted to the game; and if the two grounds could be thrown into one, it was felt by all the family that it would have been an immense improvement. This could scarcely be done, however, without asking Mrs. Titbat's permission, and also the pleasure of her company; and upon the whole it was judged best to leave matters as they were. The wire fencing between the two lawns was so very slight that they really looked to be one and the same, and as there was plenty of ground for the Duke to play upon, he would probably never discover that both the lawns did not belong to Dornoway Court.

In the course of the intimacy that existed between the junior members of the two families, the young Dornoway-Dickes, with a frankness characteristic of their age, had told the young Titbats that the Duke was coming on Friday to play lawn-tennis, but that nobody but tip-top (not Titbat) people were to be asked to meet him; nor was even this the worst, for it had certainly been hinted by elder members of the family, in view of the suggested amalgamation of the tennis-grounds, that such good neighbours as Captain and Mrs. Titbat would certainly be included in the invitation list. To explain what follows I must add that Mrs. Titbat herself was firmly persuaded that she would be among the guests, and was transported with the idea of it; for the being asked "to meet the Duke of Turniptops" (as was stated on the cards) was in Mangelwurzelshire like being presented at Court, and at once both whitewashed and gilded the invitee. One has heard of the ire of the tigress when robbed of her young, but what is that as compared with the state of mind of a lady of blemished reputation who has persuaded herself that it will be rehabilitated, and that in the most splendid fashion, and then suddenly finds that she has been given the cold shoulder? Mrs. Titbat had actually

Digitized by Google

ordered a dress from London in which to appear before his Grace of Turniptops, and the sight of it, as it hung useless in her wardrobe, envenomed her whole being, as though she had worn it, and it had been the garment of Nessus.

She clutched the skirts of Hope to the very last, but when Friday morning arrived and no invitation had come, it fled from her soul, and was replaced by the desire for vengeance. If the Dornoway-Dickes could but have known what was passing in that injured lady's mind, they might have been reminded of those warning lines—

> Lest when our latest hope is fled ye taste of our despair,
> And learn by proof in some wild hour how much the wretched dare;

or even if that quotation had not occurred to them, I am quite sure they would have asked her to their garden-party even at that eleventh hour.

The guests arrived, and in due course—that is to say, exceedingly late—the Duke. The meeting of his Grace and my host and hostess was positively affecting. I thought Mr. Dornoway-Dicke would never leave off shaking his hand, and that his wife would have kissed it. However, he got away at last to luncheon. About two hundred people sat down to it; a select twenty on mediæval chairs, and the rest on much more comfortable but common ones. A dozen of the last had been borrowed, days ago, by the housekeeper without her mistress's knowledge from the Titbats. The host enjoyed himself as most people do under similar circumstances, that is to say, he was intensely miserable and anxious, but buoyed up by the thought that it would all be over presently, and he would have "his friend, the Duke of Turniptops," to talk about for the rest of his natural life. After luncheon we all repaired to the lawn-tennis ground.

"What a capital lawn you have," observed the Duke, "and what a good plan that is of dividing your ground."

He was referring of course to the iron fencing.

"It was a plan of my wife's," observed Mr. Dornoway-Dicke; for as the other lawn was vacant there was really no need to intimate that it belonged to somebody else.

A gilt youth of the county with one of its gilt young ladies were selected for one side, and his Grace and Miss Dornoway Dicke for the other. The rest of the company stood round in attitudes of respectful admiration. They were just about to begin when the Duke observed, "Hullo! what the deuce is this?"

The exclamation was caused by the appearance of Mrs. Titbat, splendidly attired, and followed by all her maidservants; some of them carried baskets of linen, and others lines and clothes props. In the course of a few minutes the whole of the Titbat family linen was hanging on the line; some of the articles were very pronounced in shape, and became much more so when inflated by the breeze, which also (as they were purposely hung close to the wire fencing) carried their graceful folds right over the Duke's head.

The game was begun, but presently an immense petticoat broke loose, and after eddying doubtfully for a few moments settled upon the Duke

Digitized by Google

himself, who emerged from it with difficulty and with a frightful execration. He threw down his racket and said something I could not catch; indeed, I fled into a neighbouring arbour and gave myself up to such paroxysms of mirth as almost threatened me with dissolution.

I was conscious of great excitement among the company without, and heard what sounded like the hurried departure of some of them, but I was positively incapable of ascertaining what was going on. The vision of all Mangelwurzelshire's noblest as they stood around that fatal place, and pretended to ignore the fact that the very firmament was darkened above them by the Titbat family linen; and then the spectacle of that petticoat descending upon his Grace's brow, and of himself emerging from it, was always too much for me. I sat in the arbour and fairly wept. Presently, after several severe relapses, I became conscious of a companion. Beside me sat a little man, bald as a knob on the centre of a front door, and swearing softly, and as it were thoughtfully, to himself. It was only by his voice that I recognised Mr. Dornoway-Dicke.

"My dear Dicke," I murmured, for I felt it necessary to say something, "why are you here? why are you not entertaining"—I did not venture to mention the Duke—"your guests?"

"He's gone," he said. It was plain he was only thinking of one of them. "It was all on account of that infernal Mrs. Titbat. It's her own petticoat: it's marked with an M and a T."

I nodded, and held out my hand as though to entreat him to spare himself the recital of the catastrophe. I felt ready to expire. "But are all the rest of the people gone?" I murmured.

"What do I care! Yes. No. What a terrible day!"

"But, my dear Dicke," I said, beginning sincerely to pity him, "it will never do for you to stop here; you must not desert your friends."

"No, that's true," he answered, rising feebly and moving towards the house.

"But you have forgotten something."

"Have I? What? Oh, yes, my wig." It lay on the floor of the arbour where he had flung it in his frenzy. He stooped and put it on mechanically and hind before. This I ventured to remedy, and he thanked me in feeling tones. "Do you think he will ever come again?" he whispered eagerly. "He was very angry. He thought they were our own clothes hanging out to dry. I showed him the M and the T. But he would pay no attention. It is a dreadful blow."

And it really hurt poor Dornoway-Dicke exceedingly. He had not risen the next morning when I came up to town, and all the family were very much depressed as though there had been a death in the house. He has been to the club once since, in a more beautiful wig than ever, but of course it can never deceive *me*. I asked, "How are all at home?"

"Pretty well, I thank you," he said; "that is as well as can be expected. He has never been near the place since."

Of course I knew that by the personal pronoun he meant "the Duke."

JAMES PAYN.

Digitized by Google

A Visit to Hinba.

My first visit to Hinba was in July of last year. Probably not one out of every thousand of ordinary readers of English literature, has ever heard the name, or could tell where or what Hinba is. And yet I trust to be able to show that it is a spot with a remarkable history, and that possesses an interest, in one respect at least, as high as that attaching to any corner of Her Majesty's dominions. Something can be said of Hinba that cannot be said of any other place in Britain; and surely that means a good deal—in these days of levelling to the commonplace.

Hinba is at present out of the world. It is near the rush of travelling and yet beyond it. I returned yesterday from its neighbourhood by the steamer *Columba*, probably the finest passenger steamer afloat. It has a large area on its double-deck. It carried several thousands; I had never been in such a crowd afloat before. Here were hundreds of well-dressed and intelligent tourists, who talked graphically in several dialects and even in several tongues, about the beauty of Scottish scenery, the high charges of Highland hotels, and the contents of the local guide-books. In the morning they had passed almost within sight of Hinba; many of them had been to see Iona, with its modern buildings and almost modern history; and yet the spot that alone brings us back face to face with the grand old founder of the Scoto-Irish church had not been visited by any one of them. I have met the rush of tourist life during several years, both abroad and in several nooks of Scotland; no traveller, not even the American, is more intelligent or takes a more lively interest in what surrounds him than the travelled Englishman; and, in spite of all that has been said, it is only a cynic who really believes that the average Englishman is ignorant of Scotch affairs, just as it is only a jester who can affirm that Scotchmen learn geography in order to find out whereabouts the high road to England may be found on the map. As I write I am continually interrupted by a talkative *salon* full, many of whom have been in Switzerland last week and trust to run over the Highlands before the end of this. Some of them seem to have been up every mountain in Europe, to have explored every valley of the Alps, and to know the ruins of every château on the continent. They have done Iona and Staffa, and Glencoe and Skye, and even St. Kilda in the wild Atlantic; they are eloquent about our few relics of the past, the beautiful green of our isles, the rapidly changing colouring of our inlets, the grandeur of our torrents, the sternness of our hills, and the treachery of our skies. But of Hinba they know absolutely

Digitized by Google

nothing. More wonderful than that, the shrewd, long-headed natives of the county of which it forms a part are equally unconscious alike of its presence and its history. Some of these can trace back the pedigree of innumerable Campbells to the sturdy baron of Lochow; they delight in incident and tradition, and they have memories of wide compass. And still they are equally unconcerned about the place and its name. Here, then, is a spot which once played a very important part in the social and religious life of Scotland, and which has slipped altogether out of the grasp of local tradition and local memory. To visit Hinba is to raise a section of the dead and to hold an interview with it.

If the reader will look at the map of Scotland, or recall a journey by the steamer *Columba*, or its predecessor, the *Iona*, from Glasgow to Inverness, he will see where Hinba is. At Ardrishaig on Loch Fyne the passengers leave the *Columba* and are carried across the Crinan Canal on the little saloon steamer called the *Linnet*; crossing the isthmus takes about two hours. At Crinan the traveller gets on board the *Chevalier*, another handsome and swift saloon steamer, and in about half an hour he has the whirlpool of Corryvreckan on his left. No steamer goes to Hinba, which is as much out of the world as if it were in the middle of the Antarctic. Corryvreckan lies between the high black mass of Scarba on the north, and the lower but still rugged shores of Jura on the south. Almost straight out from Corryvreckan, and nearly midway between Scarba and the precipitous basaltic cliffs of Mull, lies Hinba. The currents here are generally very strong: a strong Atlantic swell beats always on the western shores of these isles, and the seas are very treacherous. It is seldom safe to pass through the whirlpool of Corryvreckan in a small craft. I have been through it in calm weather, at high tide, and have seen both ends of the ledge that causes the whirlpool. When there is a high spring tide, and the outward-rushing current meets the Atlantic breakers rolling inwards, the result is something very wild. The tide rushing rapidly outwards seems to fall over the ledge as over a cataract, and the huge rollers encountering it here cause a fearful vortex. It looks like a huge cauldron. Here is the greatest eddy on the British coast; the sea rises up in huge masses and thick spray, and the roar is sometimes deafening. In such a state of the tide it can swallow up any small boat, and no skipper of our larger craft dares venture within its dreaded circle. Very few people can see, or have ever seen, Corryvreckan at its grandest. To approach it by sea is not safe; the shores are desolate and uninhabited. But a small edition of the torrent may be seen at the Falls of Connel on Loch Etive near Oban, and quite close to the Connel station on the Calendar and Oban Railway. The traveller who is not bold enough to venture into Corryvreckan may get a fair idea of its tremendous effect by watching the rapids at Connel at certain states of the tide.

As I passed through Corryvreckan and looked out on Hinba, I heard many traditions, all of them of the harrowing class, connected with this

Digitized by Google

dreaded gulf. Old Joe, the local pilot, is a fine old Highlander of seventy-three, and he can tell the story of many a shipwreck caused by these rugged Scarba cliffs. He is himself a hero in his station, and surely a noble one. No winner of the Humane Society's honours has ever deserved them more than Old Joe. I may refer to an instance of his doings in saving life. Many years ago he and two other men were capsized about two miles off Easdale, in a stormy night, in one of the wildest seas I know. The boat was turned over, keel uppermost, and its three occupants were cast into the surging sea. Joe alone could swim, the other two were helpless. With the bold promptness of the true hero, he gathered the floating spars for his companions to cling by, tried to right the boat, and failing, dragged his mates and placed them on its keel. He then swam off in the direction of Easdale for help, landed, after several hours, more dead than alive, crawled up to the nearest cottages, raised help, and so succeeded in rescuing the two drowning men on the boat. He very nearly succumbed to the fatigue of that night; but he still lives, a finely-built old man, to pilot the ignorant through the neighbouring currents, and to tell stories that he has heard from his ancestors. Many tales of adventure and of lawless smuggling I heard, but I pass over all these in favour of the old, oft-heard, but still very beautiful tale of the origin of the name Corryvreckan:—how Breccan, a prince of Lochlin, once upon a time loved the beautiful daughter of a lord of the Isles; how the crafty island chief, fearing to offend the powerful Danish king, and yet unwilling to give his daughter's hand to the son of his hereditary foe, began to temporise, fell back upon the resources of cunning, and at last promised his consent on the condition that the suitor would give a proof of his skill and courage by anchoring three days and three nights in the dreaded whirlpool; how the young prince returned to Lochlin to consult the seers of his native land; how these advised him to get three ropes—one of hemp, one of wool, and one of fair women's hair, "every hair that of a maiden of spotless fame"; how at first the maidens of the land shrank from the condition, till the prince's popularity and sympathy for his state overcame their scruples; how a strong coil was formed of the long fair hair of the daughters of the land; how the hopeful lover returned and anchored in the very midst of the eddy; how on the first day the cable of hemp gave way, and he still had hope; on the second that of wool, and then all depended on the strength of the purity of the maids of Lochlin; how, alas, one hair and then one little coil was seen to give way, for it was cut from the tresses of one whose fair fame was now seen not to be spotless, and how this little tress, like the weak link in a strong cable, caused the whole to snap; how the poor prince of Lochlin was swallowed up in the raging vortex; how his body was rescued and dragged ashore by his faithful dog; and how his bones have bleached and crumbled to far-scattered dust in a cave that still bears his name. As this cave was pointed out, I thought that this legend had a deeper meaning than its obvious one, and that it perpetuates in one way the

Digitized by Google

expression of the dying hate of race. It is a curious and significant fact that these didactic legends are generally localised in every suitable spot. So with the legend of the adventurous piper, told me on that Corryvreckan day. The basis of the story must be very old, though its setting is very new, inasmuch as the bagpipe is a modern importation into Scotland. It is the most pathetic of all the local tales, and though told me in connection with the Jura cave, it has been localised in at least a dozen more. A foolhardy piper allowed his curiosity and love of knowledge to interfere with his safety; he braved the inertia of public opinion, and he would explore the deep recesses of the hidden cavern in spite of the warning hand of current wisdom. He entered merrily and boldly, at first playing hopeful, lively airs, but gradually he turned his notes to the despairing wail of M'Crimmon's Lament, "I return, I return, I return not for ever"; and after a feeble and piercing cry, the sounds at last died away in absolute silence. But his faithful dog, his follower in his daring hardihood, came out wretchedly mangled, and ever to dread adventure, at the mouth of a far-distant cavern. But no trace was ever found of the master who tried to penetrate the hidden darkness which public opinion had deemed dangerous. And this tale was the Highlander's comment on the spirit of the reformer. It teaches precisely the same lesson that one of the boldest of English intellects, now in the land of silence, recently taught us in the fate of the trilobites who saw the sun and the stars and reported below what they saw in the light above.

Whilst I am at Corryvreckan I must not forget a newspaper cutting, given me the other day by a very learned antiquary of the mainland. It is from the *Greenock Advertiser* of August 5, 1845, and is perhaps the most high-flown and pedantic bit of descriptive prose that has ever got into English print. The writer was a well-known schoolmaster on one of the neighbouring isles. English was a foreign tongue to him evidently. He calls Corryvreckan "a conglomeration of tremendous billows connubriated by the power of those elements called wind and water." He states that "the cause of this effervescence" is as yet unknown, unless it be "a miraculous submarine vortex, that causes a constipation of billows." He graphically informs his readers that the "gramineous valleys" of Scarba are good for "nourishing lanigerous cattle, of which the inhabitants have a great stock." After informing us, in his own style, that the tops of the Scarba mountains produce no grass, he adds that, "although the calefactiousness of the sun would cause people to produce sudor almost towards the shore, you would find water conglaciated upon its top." A part of the island, he continues, is inaccessible, "insurmountable by wild goats, in general, excepting birds of prey, of which there are a great many that dwell amongst the stupendous cliffs, which are very dangerous to the quadrupeds called lambs, owing to their carnivorous nature (I mean eagles)."

We saw no eagles hovering about the island, though several wild deer watched us from its slopes.

Digitized by Google

The day of my visit was rather stormy. By the kindness of friends at Easdale I got a steamer to bring us out. We rolled and pitched a good deal, and had some difficulty in effecting a landing, owing to the force of the back-swell. However, we got safely into the little creek on the south-east of the island, where many a coracle and primitive boat had found shelter upwards of twelve hundred years ago. Easdale is the best point to start from. Several steamers call here; and only a few yards from the pier, though invisible from the landing-place, there is a huge slate quarry upwards of 240 feet deep.

I have said that Hinba is a name that has left no record of itself in the locality. The island is the most southerly of the Garvalloch group. There is nothing remarkable in the appearance of these isles. The group is composed of six islands in a string. From end to end the length is about six miles. Dunconnel, the furthest north, has the ruins of a strong fort perched on its summit. Another, Coulbrandon, is named after St. Brendan, a contemporary of St. Columba; and the most southerly is that with which we are concerned. It is locally known as *Eilach-na-Nasimh*, the "graveyard of the saints." One or two antiquaries make it erroneously *Eilan-Nasimh*, or "Holy Island." As one stands on the highest point of this island, and looks round, he sees the open Atlantic to the west; north of him the bold, clearly cut, basaltic cliffs of Mull rise up almost perpendicularly a thousand feet, with Ben More, generally mist-capped, peeping out beyond; the long stretch of Loch Linnhe continues the direction of the island group, and vanishes in the valley of the Caledonian Canal; and Ben-Cruachan, in the midst of a wide circle of peaks, is seen to the north-east. Nether Lorn, knotty and rugged, stretches out between.

Hinba is about a mile in length; its north-west shore is very precipitous and wild; and the island slopes gently towards the south-east. It is very irregular, like all the western isles: full of little valleys and nooks; and, though at a distance it looks dark and cold, it is really green and very fertile. Its pasture is rich, and its little green nooks are very picturesque and beautiful. Only a few yards from the landing creek I came upon the old well, scooped out of the hard rock, and still running pure and fresh, as it has done for many centuries. One saw at once that this well was largely used, though long ago. A few yards further on I came upon a green, well-sheltered, beautiful plateau, formed, in prehistoric ages, by the scooping out of one of those hard dykes that are such a striking feature in the geology of this part of Scotland. Here interest begins. The plateau is extensively covered with ruins that have no parallel in the country. They tell their tale clearly. Anyone who is familiar with the ecclesiastical buildings of Western Europe sees at once that these formed part of monastic buildings. He sees also that they are very old; much older than those of Iona or Oronsay. If the visitor happens to be an archæologist, and if he is familiar with the North of Ireland and the West of Scotland, he

Digitized by Google

concludes that these ruins are quite different, in style and character, from any remains of the Celtic churches which he has seen. Perhaps he is well read in the literature of Europe, and, through some line of association, remembers how eloquently Victor Hugo, in *Notre Dame de Paris*, has shown that the thought of an age and its spiritual efforts impress themselves on its architecture; that the genius of the architect gathers up the highest thought of every era, and gives it its highest permanence, in however humble fashion, in stone and lime, and that architecture, especially that devoted to sacred things, is a book that can be read, and that carries down its contents to after ages. To such a person these ruins open up a path to a section of the religious thought of the past. But even though one's eye be not educated, and though one may not have the creative soul of the poet, he finds here something altogether unique. Here are the remains of well-built houses, which were in a style neither Gothic nor Norman. Nothing Greek is here, except a very rude Greek cross. These have no parallel amidst the ruins of ecclesiastical buildings in Scotland or in Britain. No lime, mortar, cement, or anything that binds was used here. The walls were all built of slabs of the clay-slate, abundantly found in the neighbouring isles. These were laid horizontally, but very firmly, on each other; and yet the walls were beautiful. All the buildings were small; I took a rough measurement. The church was only twenty-two feet long. It had at least two windows. All the houses were badly lighted, and the windows were narrow. Quite close to the church I saw the ruins of a number of smaller dwellings, doubtless used as the domestic part of the monastery. Beside these, again, there is a curious little building, with one end square and the other rounded. The inside of the semicircular end is built up to the height of four or five feet; and through this solid block a hole descends, connecting with a furnace. This was the kiln, on which the monks dried their grain. There are some other remains here, one perhaps that of the oratory, but I was not able to identify them.

To the south of the church there is a curious underground cell. Were it not that the fresh-water fountain, already referred to, is near, I would be inclined to think that the monastic well was here. Dr. Gillies and I descended into this pit through a slanting aperture lined with flagstones. The roof is covered with huge slabs, with the greensward above. We found ourselves in a subterranean cavern, neither square nor oval, about five feet in diameter. It was built round with stones. Behind this there was an irregular recess. This cell, according to explanatory tradition, was the penitentiary of the establishment, where the peccant monks had to sit imprisoned, with their hands wedged in between the slabs of the recess.

Somewhat lower down, in the hollow to the south of the church, is the old cemetery, where several tombstones, and at least one with a rude Celtic cross cut on it, point to a remote antiquity. By probing the

Digitized by Google

soil, I discovered that several tombstones lie a considerable distance underground. On a little eminence to the south of this burying-place is perhaps the oldest gravestone on the island. It is within a small circular enclosure, and marked by a headstone with a very primitive cross inscribed on it. The well of Hinba is still locally known as Columba's Well; and tradition, so rich in explanatory expedients, affirms that the saint's mother is buried on this eminence.

Let us now retrace our steps, and walk northwards beyond the church, till we come upon the remains of the monks' cells. They are not unlike the rounded stalks of glass-works; but they are more like bee-hives. There were two of them, each with its own door, and with a connecting door between. The larger, which was about fifteen feet in diameter and eighteen feet high, was also the more perfect of the two. Towards the base the cells are very thick, but they become thinner and thinner as the circular dwellings narrow towards the top. They are in the same style as the other monastic buildings. To enter or go through the communicating passage, one would require to bend or crawl on all fours.

This, then, is a very rough sketch of the remains to be found on this wild, irregular, but beautiful island. No other dwelling was here. All the ruins on the island are those of ecclesiastical buildings. A number of cattle graze about, and a herd visits them once or twice in the year. A few fishermen who are driven by stress of weather to find shelter, occasionally take refuge in the bee-hive cells. But that is all. No farmer with a taste for vandalism has his abode here; no farmer has ever lived here. Not only is the island now uninhabited, but there is no evidence that it ever was inhabited, except by the ecclesiastical colony that built these dwellings and resided in them. No vandal tourist has ever been here. The island has occasionally been visited by adventurous archæologists, but they were of the class who would as soon put their hands into a roaring furnace as remove a fragment of an old and therefore sacred building. And thus the destiny of the stern Hinba has been singular. Distance and the fury of the waves have hitherto preserved this bit of holy ground from the vandalism of last century and the curiosity of this. Iona has fared differently. Not a fragment of its fine altar-piece now remains. And so it has been everywhere along the west of Scotland except in Hinba. When a petty laird wanted to build his mansion he did not scruple to use the best stones in the nearest ruin for corner-stones and chimneys; farmers made gateposts out of gravestones, and both the church and graveyard were the quarry whence the neighbourhood got its architectural ornaments. Thus, as well as through the pilfering tendencies of tourists, many a fine monument of the past has vanished: churches have been pulled down, and gravestones and even the sepulchres of the kings turned to ignoble uses. The only exception, I repeat, is Hinba. It remains as it was hundreds of years ago.

Now there can be no rational doubt that this island is the Hinba

Digitized by Google

that meets one so frequently in Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba*, the great founder of the Scoto-Celtic church, and that the monastery was an offshoot of the establishment of Iona. Here, then, we face the sixth century as it passed over the west of Scotland. It is no part of my present purpose either to detail some reasons why I think this is Hinba, or to discuss the authenticity of Adamnan's work. Adamnan was Abbot of Iona just a century after St. Columba, and there is ample proof that he lived sufficiently near what he relates to know it. He wrote at a time when great movements were sweeping over Europe. The Roman power was making violent efforts to restore itself, and the Gothic civilisation was encroaching upon the effete economy of the Cæsars. Yet, unheeding all these disturbances, the monk wrote as confidently as if the small western isles were the centre of the whole world. In reading Adamnan we are dealing, of course, with the beliefs of a past age, but these, whatever else they were, as Dean Milman has said, are a part of the history of that age, and must be taken at their value. We are, of course, in a region of quaint marvels. I may here quote a few of the references which Adamnan makes to this island. The saint went on one occasion to Hinba—*Hinba insula*—and he gave orders that even the penitents should have some indulgence as regards their food. But one of the penitents, called Neman, the son of Cathair, in the face of the order of the saint, declined to accept this indulgence. The saint rebuked him severely, adding: "The time will come when thou wilt stealthily eat mare's flesh as thou liest concealed in the woods among robbers." And Neman was found in a forest with robbers, eating it off a wooden girdle, as was foretold. Another incident is more touching. The saint had sent Ernan, his uncle, now an aged priest, to preside over the monastery that he had founded some years before in Hinba; but the old man soon broke down in health, returned to Iona, and died. The saint was certainly of a fiery, if not fierce disposition. He made full use of the power of excommunication, and sometimes overcame his enemies by cursing them. Another reference to Hinba shows him in this light. When the blessed man was living on the island of Hinba, he set about excommunicating some destroyers of the churches, and amongst them the sons of Connell [Dunconnel is quite near]. But one of their wicked companions was instigated by the devil to rush on the saint with a spear in order to kill him. One of the brethren was willing to sacrifice his life for the sake of that of the holy man, and he put on the saint's cowl and came between the saint and death. And the spear, though very sharp, and thrust by a powerful man, could not penetrate through the garment, which was like a strong fence around the wearer. The ruffian thought he had killed the saint with his spear, and retraced his steps. But he did not escape; St. Columba knew that he would die. A skirmish took place exactly a year afterwards on the neighbouring isle of Liung between two septs, and the would-be assassin was slain by a spear thrown in the name of St. Columba. On another occasion

Digitized by Google

whilst staying on Hinba this eminent man saw, in the night time, an angel sent to him from heaven, and having in his hand a book of glass about the appointment of a king over the Dalriadic Scots. The venerable man received the book from the angel and began to read it, but he was reluctant to appoint Aidan, as the book directed, for he preferred his brother. Whereupon the angel, suddenly stretching forth his hand, struck the saint with a rod, the livid marks of which remained in his side all the days of his life. And he threatened to scourge him again unless he would do as the book of glass directed. The angel appeared on three successive nights with the same book in his hand, repeating the same commands regarding the appointment of the same king. And the saint obeyed, and he sailed across to the island of Hy, now Iona, and ordained Aidan to be king as he was directed, and then blessed and consecrated him. After that four holy founders of monasteries came over from Ireland to visit St. Columba, and they found him on Hinba. They all with one consent asked the saint to consecrate the holy mysteries of the Eucharist in their presence in the church. The saint complied, and they all entered the church on Sunday after the reading of the Gospel, and one of them saw during the celebration a ball of heavenly fire lighting up the place. On another occasion, when the holy man was living in Hinba, the grace of the Holy Spirit was communicated to him abundantly, and for three whole days and three whole nights he allowed no one to approach him, and he took no food, but remained shut up in a house filled with heavenly brightness. And during the night this heavenly light was ever streaming out through the chinks of the doors and keyholes, and the voice of the saint was heard singing spiritual songs. He got fresh insight into many events; many secrot things were revealed to him; and many difficult passages of sacred Scripture were made quite plain and clearer than the light to the eye. And he grieved that his beloved disciple Baithen was not with him to share in the purer spiritual light. Baithen, however, was detained by contrary winds in Eigg, and he could not therefore arrive at Hinba before the glorious vision had come to its close. The last passage that I will quote is very significant in the light cast on the spot and its history by the existing penitential cells. It is in connection with the death of St. Columba, which happened, as the reader perhaps knows, at Iona. The event produced a profound impression on the Scoto-Celtic church. Many predictions and visions in connection with it were told. Virgnous or Fergna, who had come over from Ireland and spent the rest of his life on Hinba, used to relate one of these visions to the monks. He lived for many years without reproach amongst the brethren. After he came to Hinba he passed his life as an anchorite for thirteen years more in the hermitage of Muirbuilemar. There were several such anchorites, men who retired from the world, and spent their life in solitary seclusion on this remote island.

These references were culled from Adamnan. They are both quaint and interesting. They bring us to the verge of several questions relating

Digitized by Google

to the early civilisation of Scotland. I think it can be shown very clearly that this Scoto-Irish church, founded on the west of Scotland by St. Columba, was, on the one hand, very different from the Latin or Catholic church of Western Europe, and on the other from the old Scottish Culdee church. This is not the place to discuss fully the relation of the one to the other. It can be shown, however, that there was a monastery, of Irish origin, here on Hinba before St. Columba planted his cœnobitical institution on Iona. The buildings on Iona, we know, were either huts of turf or rude wattled dwellings; on Hinba they were made of coarse stone. The Columban remains of Iona have absolutely disappeared: they are still on Hinba. The Columban church was tribal, not parochial; but here we find one fact that is sufficient to raise many questions. The two bee-hive cells are joined together. In the west of Scotland, did the solitary life of the ecclesiastic develop into the social, or the social into the solitary? Did the monk pass into the anchorite, or the anchorite into the monk? Which was considered the purer and higher life, that of the solitary, or that of the brotherhood?

These questions are not so easily answered; but references that old Scoto-Irish writers make to the Columban, and to its successor, the Culdean church, when placed side by side, show that a great civilisation, now forgotten and gone, leaving not a trace behind it, except these rude ruins on Hinba, once moulded the social life of the West and North of Scotland, and that that civilisation was as nearly as possible self-contained, and narrow, and almost independent of that of the rest of Europe.

Digitized by Google

My Baby or My Dog?

WHAT a question for a paterfamilias to put! But how else can I put it? "My baby *and* my dog," I hear some one suggesting; but, dear reader, that evades the difficulty. Baby or dog is just as much one of those alternatives that have convulsed the world as Athanasian or Arian? Guelph or Ghibelline? Cavalier or Roundhead? Sheite or Sunnite? Dizzy or Gladstone? And I wish to treat of that alternative.

But as for the title, now my purpose is discovered, it shall be as thou wilt, thou who perusest. Let me now explain my meaning.

A craving for authority is the most potent of human ills. The dignity of the Upper House, the upper housemaid, the upper scullion, the upper anybody, is of countless importance in their own eyes. And why not? for provided number One can find a number Two to be lorded over, with respect to that number Two he is as supreme as the Emperor of all the Russias. The swallow-tails of Mr. Jones, the butler, are just as much an object of reverence to poor Jeames, arrayed in the gaudy livery of servitude, as the blacksmith's apron of Irak to the meanest soldier in the Persian hosts. Man and woman are alike in this respect; but the former is generally gratified with the exercise of authority long before he is fit for it. Woman, on the contrary, is baulked of her desire till she has taken the most momentous step of her lifetime. With her there is no gentle sliding into the ways of command. When she leaves the marriage-altar she feels that a strange new burden has been imposed on her: she has now to assume authority. It is with a sense of reluctance that she issues commands; witness the bashfulness of the young housekeeper. The tiara of wedded life and wedded responsibilities sits heavy on her brows until many weeks of office be past. Ultimately, I grant you, her rule is the more effectual by reason of the soft sympathy of her sway.

Hitherto marriage and motherhood have been considered the proper field for woman's talent; and what nobler vocation can there be than the construction of that human architecture? "To suckle fools and chronicle small beer," was Iago's cynical summary of the feminine functions, and has been a constant thorn in the side of modern agitators. I take it, however, the suckling of fools is a bigger business than is generally imagined, for "she who rocks the cradle sways the world." Until within recent times a woman's happiness or unhappiness was summed up in the alternative, marriage or no marriage. Marriage

Digitized by Google

opened out to her a prospect of increasing responsibility and varied interests; while, without marriage, life was a mere barren waste, an *aer senza stelle*, a blank. In those days a mother lived for her children, who constituted the permanent link between herself and her husband, and gave her her little realm of absolute command. How wisely her affairs were managed is no affair of ours; doubtless, as it was an absolute monarchy, the administration was more or less subject to abuses. In short, the married woman was the ideal of the unmarried, and a subject of constant imitation. Did Mrs. de Vincey adore her Alfred, Miss de Vincey had an equal admiration for her Pompey. Did Lady Pommeroy ruin that child's digestion with sweetmeats, Miss Pommeroy was equally careful to distend that poodle's stomach with sugarplums. If the Baroness von Blitzen was just a little too sharp with her boy, Fräulein's *Dachshund* was sure to suffer for it. Thus, from imitation, this spurious wedlock between the human and canine rose into rivalry with the other, till old Miss Caudle was heard with something akin to interest when she stated in the roundest terms that, "as compared with her King Charles, children were more bother than they were worth—nasty squalling little brats!" At length it came to be a matter of course that all willy-nilly spinsters went to the canine race to be consoled for the evils of imperfect civilisation. Nowadays, also, though the equalising tendency of social reform is wiping out all broad and black lines, I confidently believe that if a census were instituted of dogs kept by old maids and women in general of desolate condition, it would be found the number of these animals is reduced by just as many single ladies as are at present concerned in petitioning Her Majesty for the removal of women's disabilities.

A quaint old Greek poet, in ascribing the qualities of animals to womankind, says that some women are *like* dogs. Such a one is a curious, gossiping woman, always running about and hunting up scraps of news about everybody and everything; "nor" (I quote Mr. Mahaffy's translation) "can her husband make her stop even with threats, though in a rage he should knock her teeth out with a stone, nor though he speak to her gently, even when she is sitting in company with guests." Without wishing to make any further comparison between these unpleasant ladies and the advocates of feminine franchise than that in both cases considerable energy is displayed, we may conjecture that old Simonides detected the connection between the ungratified desire for authority as developing activity, and affection for animals, dogs in particular. We all know how high party feeling runs nowadays with regard to marriage, and "baby or dog" is only one expression of it.

In the importance of the question here concealed, the length of this preamble finds its excuse. Indeed, to attempt a discussion of the matter as it deserves is too grave an undertaking, nor is sufficient space available for it. Let it then suffice that I should approach the problem from an indirect point of view.

Digitized by Google

Reader, I am a paterfamilias.

First, then, I will give you the character of my dog. "Of course," I hear you say, "he is a remarkable dog, or why this *coq-à-l'âne?*" Not at all; I regret to have to contradict you. He is quite an ordinary dog—perfectly ordinary. The ugliest of human beings has a sort of beauty; so the most ordinary of dogs has a sort of *remarkability.* Punch—I beg pardon, he should have had a more ceremonious introduction—is no wandering Willie, no canine prodigy, no subject for Landseer's human animalisms. Punch is always a dog, essentially a dog—a John Bull of caninity; not that he is dogged in his doggism, no! it is the natural result of his honesty. He has no pedigree—the more the dog for that perchance. He came to me from the Dogs' Home, that godsend to the persecuted. He is a short, round brown retriever, of no particular dignity of presence, of no particular silkiness of coat. He is not ill-bred, not well-bred. In short, he belongs to the respectable middle class of dogs. He has few front teeth (he gave me permission to look into his mouth, knowing that I should not misrepresent him); he has a touch of asthma and a touch of rheumatism; he feeds sparingly, but will eat anything.

The most salient point of his character is imperturbability. He is apparently at home everywhere; no locality, no combination of circumstances appears unfamiliar to him—kitchen, drawing-room, phaeton, guard's van, kennel *sub Jove,* pursuit of the rabbit, pursuit of the omnibus, all are alike to him. He brings the *Daily News* and the *Pall Mall* with equal contentment. The streets of London contain no novelty for him: Lord Mayor's shows, steam rollers, electric lights, and menageries are dignified with a pause and a sniff, for Punch is satisfied that he has seen something very like them all before.

His master he recognises as such with respectful deferentiality, not with obtrusive servility. He is grateful for attention, but never solicits it. Towards mankind in general he preserves a confiding and liberal attitude; strange to say, one and all, he trusts them. And why? Because, stranger still, they are always kind to him; they care about him twenty times as much as he cares about them. As he trots along the pavement, no one—not even the old women are afraid of him; he looks so sane, and his tail oscillates so contentedly. I have often wondered how he passed into this condition of mind, that mankind in general were *not* to be treated with distance and suspicion. Was it the result of long acquaintance? Hardly, I think, because it is just this independent attitude which disarms them towards him. Was it and is it his goodness and singleness of heart? This is more probable. Or is it some such reason as made the German philosopher remark that, amid the wickedness of mankind, it is good to look into a dog's face and say, "Here, at least, is an honest friend"? Does Punch say, "Dogdom is full of all guile; mankind is too stupid to be dishonest"? Who knows?

He has one weakness, and that is a cat; all his superfluity of spirits

Digitized by Google

is merged in an immoderate desire to behold, run after, and bark at a cat. The love-song of that tile-haunting animal is a source of pleasure to him, even when its echoes reach the genteel atmosphere of the drawing-room—not that he ruffles the tranquillity of that sanctuary with a whine or a bark; you wrong him if you think that for a moment. He merely beats time with his ears, elevating first one and then the other. Freed from these trammels his behaviour is different. The sight of a cat makes him frantic. He will rush down a whole street, not to murder one of these innocent creatures, only to bark at her and make her run away—which, by the way, she never does, for she knows it is only his joke. "Here we are again!" "Be off now, or I'll——!" represents the sum total of the bellicose operations between them. Once, however —I blush to repeat it; and yet why should I? for that has been his only crime, and one sin, be it a sufficiently heinous one, makes a good man greater—*si non erráasset, fecerat ille minus*—once, I say, he killed a cat; but *dux femina facti*, a woman was at the bottom of it. He was keeping company with a lady of superior breeding, but less morality, and she doubtless egged him on. She made it the price of her attentions. "Show me your pedigree," asked the haughty dame. "Ich habe Nichts und doch genug," he replied, with something of the modern spirit. "Then prove me your worth by prowess in the field." "If doughty deeds my lady please," he said—and straightway did the deed. But the ghost of the victim haunts him in his dreams.

There is one habit he has which perplexes me, and seems to indicate the existence of complex mental phenomena. Each morning, as the appointed hour draws near for me to quit breezy and suburban leisure for the stifling fogs of officialism, whither it is my habit to proceed on foot, Punch becomes excited; and when at length I go into the hall, and put on my coat, his excitement is tremendous. But he does not caper about or bark in the house; this, he knows, would be unmannerly. Consequently he retires into the library, and simulates indifference. He cannot, however, suppress an occasional whine of impatience, and his frequent change of position indicates the unrestful condition of his mind. Now he hears the sound of the latch, and his agitation reaches a climax. Still, however, he maintains his self-control. If the front door slam without the permissive whistle, he yields to despondency; but if I give him leave to accompany me his joy is great, and he testifies his gratitude by offering to carry my umbrella. This side of Punch's character I confess my inability to explain. Either he is actuated by motives of pride, which prevent his wishing to appear in the light of asking a favour; or he is apprehensive of being betrayed into an unseemly exhibition of feeling; or, perchance, like others I wot of, he will not give expression to his opinions for fear of being contradicted. Dr. Johnson remarks that our natural inclination is to obtain things in the nearest way, and that we are only cured of this by education. Punch's conduct, then, seems to indicate a very advanced stage of civilisation. So much for my

Digitized by Google

dog, and I think you will allow that he is an interesting and loveable companion.

As to my baby, I must inform you that my impressions are only first impressions, the infant in question having but lately attained to the dignity of a nurse.

It was the practice, old Samuel Butler tells us, amongst a people whom he calls "Chineses," who, whoever they may have been, were many centuries nearer the acme of civilisation than ourselves, for the father, on the birth of a child, to retire to his bed and receive the condolences of his friends, while the mother was sent about her duties as usual. This is sensible; but what a lamentable inversion of this practice exists with us! Upstairs the father is treated with ignominy, insulted by a stranger whose sex prevents him from retaliating, regarded as an interloper, and scarcely even allowed to inspect the *origo mali*. He retires to his library, and seeks consolation in study, looking forward to meal-time in order to break the monotony of the day. Time wears on. He rings his bell, which is not answered; he wants coals, but is forced to do without them; the fire goes out, and he puts on an overcoat; he hears the frequent slam of the area gate, and the sound of strange male laughter in the basement. Dinner-time arrives; he has ordered a simple meal in order not to give trouble; the cover is lifted, and discloses a chop. The servant departs in haste, as well she may; for when he inserts the knife the result is too nauseous for description. The meal has evidently *not given much trouble*. He rings the bell, and, with a satirical emphasis worthy of a more intelligent audience, requests that "*that* may be removed and have the chill taken off." Next night he dines with a few friends at the club, goes to the play, and returns to find the doors barred against him. From this period of a man's existence might well be dated the commencement of a depraved career.

Such being the attendant circumstances, it cannot be imagined that a father is naturally predisposed to be favourable to his offspring; the treatment he experiences during the short and scanty interviews he has with it is not calculated to increase his feelings of paternity towards it. If he asks questions, they are answered with a curtness amounting to incivility; if he makes remarks, they are regarded as the gibberings of a baboon or the mutterings of a lunatic, while it is dinned into his ears that the child is an exact reproduction of the mother, and bears no resemblance whatever to himself. This is evidently meant for an insult, and, whether it may mortify the parent's feelings or not, the obvious malevolence with which the sentence is pointed cannot fail to be unpleasant.

Let it be granted, then, that a father who loves his newborn child must indeed have a partiality for babies. Now a baby *per se* I have a rooted objection to, an objection founded on a long and varied experience. Who does not know the misery of paying an afternoon visit to a young and charming mother, who thinks "you must just see baby before you go"? The bell is rung, and nurse and baby are sent for. The

Digitized by Google

interval is lengthy. The mother hints that "nurse does not like bringing baby downstairs." You begin to imagine that "nurse" must be a sensible sort of person. The moments lengthen, and conversation becomes more and more impossible; you both sit facing the door in a state of nervous anxiety. Presently footsteps are heard, and likewise those unearthly sounds which nurses imagine to be pleasing to babies. The door opens. Now the momentous question flashes across you in all the terrible earnestness of reality: Are you to rise and rush to the door with outstretched arms and mingled expressions of joy and gratitude? If so, be sure you can sustain your effusive attitude, for a collapse will entail upon you untold ignominy. On the contrary, stop where you are, and you lay yourself open to the charge of brutal indifference. Here is a fit occasion for the intervention of the heavenly powers! So, when at length you are brought face to face with this terrible object, what course are you to pursue? The same dilemma again. Your inaction begets suspicion on the part of your friend, while facetious interference brings down on you the wrath of the nurse and the squalls of the infant.

I am peculiarly unfitted to deal with humanity in this embarrassing stage. Some years ago I was travelling by train in a full carriage which contained, amongst other people, a nurse and baby of some two years of age. This ill-starred brat fixed its eyes steadily upon me; so in a good-natured way, wishing to afford it some amusement, I made a grimace. The consequences, though flattering to my powers of facial expression, were disastrous in the extreme. Howl succeeded howl. Nurse caught the babe to her bosom, and me *in flagrante delicto*. The thrilling nature of the scene caused all the occupants of the compartment, hitherto strangers, to become linked together as it were by common sympathy against a common enemy. I never should have believed that mere looks could be so pregnant. *I* was the base man! *I* was the desecrator of hearths and homes, the oppressor of the widow and the orphan! . . . I changed carriages at the next station.

Somebody—Sheridan, I suppose—said that of all wines he liked other people's the best; this expresses my feeling about babies. Sheridan's reasons, however, differ from mine. He liked other people's wine better than his own because he saw *more* of it; I like other people's babies better than my own because I see *less* of them. In the far West, according to Mr. Herbert Spencer, the title of father is so essential to respectability, that it is the custom to call a childless man the father of his dog. Of what moment is not that step from honorary fatherhood to fatherhood proper? Shall I confess that I hanker after retrogression in this matter?

What! madam, you say I am heartless, unnatural—that I would ignore a natural law on which the whole of society is based. In short, you express your utmost abhorrence of me and my opinions. Be it so! England is a free country, and as a man may state his opinions, so may

Digitized by Google

another insinuate that he thinks both them and him beneath contempt. Nay, madam, I will go a step further. Such reverence have I for the female sex, that I would give them all opportunity to enunciate their ideas. You shall horsewhip me. I am at home every day at four o'clock, and I will take every care that a serviceable horsewhip shall be in the hall. A generous offer! but you will not come.

Ha! madam, I know you! You have one house in Grosvenor Square, and another in Hampshire. The nursery is as far removed from the apartments which you inhabit "as from the centre thrice to the utmost pole." Your children are presided over by women from foreign lands, and the ghost of a squeal never ruffled "your slumbrous shrine's perfumed atmosphere." A powdered flunkey announced to you the first appearance of a "grinder" in the tender gums of your son and heir; and you went to the county ball the night he had bronchitis. Nay! hold thy peace; thou art not alone in thy generation.

Unnatural! heartless! egotistical! Yes, I fear your accusations are true. Yet these very qualities, which have earned me your dislike, may allow of their owner possessing a certain sentiment towards his infant that the charitable would construe into the gentler attributes of paternity. This egotism in me becomes metamorphosed, commercially, into a feeling of vested interest; humanly, into a consciousness of authorship. I ask—impartially, be it understood—is more than this possible for a rational creature? "Poor inch of nature," as he is there asleep, with his little animal passions translated to the world of dream—for we conjecture, by the movement of his lips, that he is plunged in visions of boundless pap—what prognostications can we discern in him of nobility and greatness? Is it not dawn without sunrise? He has the form and semblance of humanity; but what besides? Like a wooden leg in a pantaloon, there is a sense of incompleteness about him. He is fearfully and wonderfully made. He is constructed so as to wail when he is hungry, to sleep when he is sated. He is a perfect machine, and a powerful one; for he keeps the whole household in motion—not so unlovely neither. But, like a model steam-engine in a glass case, what is the use of him? Everybody worships him; and why? Not perhaps for what he is, but for what he will be. Presumptive prescience! I have a kitten who compares with him most favourably. Firstly, it makes no noise; secondly, it feeds itself with little or no commotion; and, thirdly, Providence has furnished it with all the essentials of amusement in the shape of a tail. "Look on this picture and on that."

. . . . . .

"My dear fellow, yes; this isn't the thing, you know; it isn't the thing. You start with the enunciation of a thesis, a distinct thesis, which you treat in the most discursive manner, and at the end you haven't really discussed your problem or recorded your own views upon the question. Form, my dear fellow, is a primary condition of art."

Digitized by Google

This is the dictum of Savile Brown, most dreaded when anonymous. Perhaps he is right. But I deny the *right* of any man, except Marwood —and his time has not yet come—to force me to a conclusion. There is, however, a solution to the problem. Let me whisper it in your ear, reader—but no! the problem solves itself. Listen to those sounds of infant wailing, not so hard to hear. Perchance, though, you are not a family man; then, doubtless, your compositions are models of lucid diction, harmonious proportion, clear common-sense. No housemaid, big with orders from the *other* department, enters your study in your absence, brushes away the cobwebs of imagination, and effaces the dusty evidences of former toil, which should be the germs of triumph to come —who sees no order where order is. "Brutal housemaid! base-minded, dull-headed wench!" you say; but that housemaid and those sounds of wailing are just as much elements of this essay as the thesis with which I prefaced it. It was not a blind, not a covert device to bribe your attention. You may be angry and disappointed; but remember you are not a family man, and that others of us are. "When fools speak, a wise man should be there to hear." I am the fool, of course; you are the wise man. But grant me this, that I have put before you a state of things which cries aloud for reform, and for which there appears to be no practicable remedy. Let me, too, make a suggestion, a suggestion shadowy and delicately implied; for, to tell you the truth, I have some fears on the score of the Hampshire lady, and I feel bound to keep my word about the horsewhip. It was a main sociological principle of one of Swift's mythical peoples, that the child had no cause of gratitude to its father or mother for bringing it into the world, being a world of misery and strife. This peculiarity was attended with a peculiarly happy result: the child was educated apart from the parental roof. A reversal of premises often leads to a like deduction. My theory of the relations between father and son is diametrically different. A man, when he becomes a father, is born anew—is translated, as it were, to another world. Before this his life was all joy and peace; it is only now that he makes acquaintance with that "world of misery and strife." He is transmogrified; he descends the scale of creation; he becomes an inferior animal. From the depths of his degradation he beholds his servants draining his pockets, and lording it over himself and his belongings; his home has become a house of bondage. His child is his father who brings him into this world, and society expects that between it and him there should be a constant interchange of grateful sentiment. Bah! if society were not impersonal, I would kick it.

L. T.

Digitized by Google

Chippers of Flint.

GRUBBING among the low-lying silt at the mouth of the Devonshire Axe this sunny winter morning, I have come across a splinter of flint which looks at first sight like a mere accidental flake broken off the side of a larger nugget. If I had never hunted for prehistoric knives and arrow-heads before, I might easily fancy this a chance piece washed down by the rain from the neighbouring chalk cliffs at Beer. But I have seen enough already of these primitive human tools to recognise the present specimen at once as a genuine work of prehistoric art. Rough as it seems, it was rudely chipped into its existing shape by the black men who chased the reindeer and the elk thousands of years since in the green valley around us.

Who were these black men, and when did they live? How much can we find out about them now, and what can we learn about the England of their day? All these questions are immensely interesting, and they are as yet but little understood in their true bearings even by many of those who have read and heard a good deal about them in the dry language of technical geologists.

Almost every one knows the familiar division of the prehistoric human epoch into the three Ages of Stone, Bronze, and Iron. Now, when this division was first made, it represented a real advance in our knowledge, and it was therefore a useful and a good classification. But the progress of science and discovery has long ago rendered the three stereotyped phrases so far obsolete as to be very misleading to the ungeologic mind. People generally fancy that there was first a Stone Age, which lasted, let us say, a few thousand years; then a Bronze Age, which lasted a few more thousand years; and finally an Iron Age, which lasts to the present day. In reality, however, such a notion, as we shall see hereafter, is almost as absurd as if we were to divide English history into the period before the present century, the reigns of George IV. and William IV., and the reign of Victoria. Under the single name of the Stone Age we are lumping together a vast and utterly immeasurable lapse of time, while under the names of Bronze and Iron Ages we are dividing two small epochs which run into one another indistinguishably.

Sir John Lubbock long ago introduced two convenient terms for the two subdivisions of this great and heterogeneous Stone Age—the *neolithic* or epoch of ground flint weapons, and the *palæolithic* or epoch of chipped flint weapons. Now, to actual flint-hunters, who wish to give a name to every specimen that they find, these terms are very

Digitized by Google

useful. When we have discovered a hatchet or a knife, we want a label to distinguish its relative position in time. But for general use the words in question are decidedly misleading, for they naturally beget a belief that the Stone Age was one comparatively homogeneous period, divisible into two sub-periods, the palæolithic and the neolithic. To repeat our previous comparison, it is almost as though we were to divide historical time into three epochs, the Ancient, the Mediæval, and the Modern, and were then to subdivide the Ancient epoch into the First Ancient or Ante-diluvian, and the Second Ancient or Anglo-Saxon time. In fact, the real great gap is between the palæolithic age on the one hand, and the neolithic, bronze, and iron ages on the other. Hence Sir John Lubbock's two words, though excellent when applied to the weapons themselves, are decidedly apt to produce misconceptions when used as the names of prehistoric periods. In speaking of the first great age, when the flake which I hold in my hand was manufactured, it may be better for our present purpose to use the expression—Chipped Flint Period. What this expression really means we may see more fully by taking a retrospective glance at the previous inhabitants of Western Europe.

When Caius Cæsar first came to Britain, he found it populated by two races of men, the light-haired Kelts and the dark-haired Silurians. The fair men were identical in blood with the Gauls of the continent; the dark men answered, as Tacitus thought, to the Iberians of Spain, whose pure descendants still survive in the isolated nationality of the Basques. When we go back from historical times to the mounds and barrows which crown our English wolds, we find reason to suppose that before the Kelts settled in the western peninsulas of Europe, the whole of our continent was occupied by the dark-haired or Euskarian race. At a still earlier epoch there seem good grounds for supposing that a population of yellow-faced and almond-eyed Mongolians spread over the greater part of the European world. Of these we still find relics among the Finns and Lapps, who speak a language belonging to the same type as those spoken by the great nomad tribes of Central Asia. The relations of these three races among themselves have little interest as regards our present subject; it is sufficient to note that representatives of all three still exist in our own modern Europe. Each of them seems to have been driven in turn towards the least desirable parts of the continent by a horde of fresh intruders. First of all, it would appear, the Mongolians, who once roamed over the broad central plains of Russia and Germany, were pushed westward and northward by the advancing Euskarians, till only a remnant of them at length remained in the wintry northern peninsulas of Finland and Lapland. Then the Euskarians in turn seem to have been ousted from their most fruitful pasture-lands and their richest hunting-grounds by the Aryan Kelts, till they were finally cooped up in the western extremities of Europe, such as Silurian South Wales and the rugged Basque country, where the Asturian mountains

Digitized by Google

push their westward end into the ocean in the furthest promontory of Finisterre. But the Basque blood has mixed largely with that of the Kelts in all the peninsulas and islands of the Atlantic, so that the dark Euskarian type preponderates over the light Keltic in Ireland, Spain, and many parts of France. Finally, the Kelts themselves again were driven from Central Europe by their own Aryan brethren, the Teutons, one branch of whom, the English nation, has settled in Britain, holding for itself the rich secondary and tertiary slopes of the south-eastern half, and leaving to the mingled Keltic and Euskarian people only the wild primary mountain tracts of the Scotch Highlands, Wales, and Cornwall.

Now, all these races belong to that second human epoch which, in contradistinction to the Chipped Flint Age, we may speak of as the Recent Period. They have all existed within the time to which the word "recent" is applied by geologists; and since their appearance upon the European stage no great natural changes of climate or geographical condition have taken place. All three races have probably from the first coexisted with one another, and all three have apparently passed through the same stages of culture almost simultaneously. In the earliest monuments raised by these men of the Recent Period we find polished stone hatchets of exquisite workmanship, betokening a comparatively high degree of civilisation. At a slightly later date we meet with a few bronze implements, interspersed amongst the stone types. In still more modern barrows the bronze predominates. And in the latest barrows of all we come across iron, though not necessarily to the exclusion of the two earlier materials.

In all this we see evidence of a gradual increase of culture, without any great and notable physical break. The Mongolians, the Euskarians, and the Kelts all alike progressed from the use of polished stone alone to the use of bronze and iron. But from the very first moment of the Recent Period to the present day the progress seems on the whole to have been one and continuous. No gap separates the Polished Stone from the Bronze and Iron Ages. We can nowhere put our finger upon a definite date and say, "Here the one age merges into the other."

Between the Chipped Flint and the Recent Periods, however, a very distinct and marked gap does really occur. The whole fauna, the climatic conditions, the general geographical position is entirely different between the Europe of the flint-chippers and the Europe of the polished stone makers and metal workers. In mounds and tombs built on our existing hills, and still preserving their original forms, we find the shapely greenstone hatchets and the bronze axes of our Mongolian and Euskarian predecessors. The face of nature still remains essentially the same as when they looked upon it from their ancient villages. But these far earlier weapons of unground flint, rudely broken off from the parent nodule by dexterous side-blows, and unpolished by any subsequent process, belong to an almost incalculably older world. We do not find them in still unopened barrows or among the ruins of well-built

Digitized by Google

lake dwellings, but buried away in the drift, or deep sunk amidst the gravel of rivers, or hidden under the concreted floor of primæval caves. An enormous interval separates the men who used the chipped flints from their remote successors, the men who framed the polished stone and bronze utensils. Since their day caverns have been filled up with successive layers of clay and gravel; rivers have cut their channels through hundreds of feet of chalk cliff and red crag; gorges have deepened and widened into open dales; and great sheets of silt have covered the surface of wide alluvial plains. The mammoth, the rhinoceros, and the cave-lion shared with the flint-chippers the Europe of that ancient time. Some immense change has since taken place which altered the whole aspect of our northern hemisphere, and killed off the fauna in whose midst primæval man struggled for supremacy. In the days of the palæolithic savages, Europe was still continuous with a sub-tropical land, and possessed a semi-tropical type of fauna; in the days of the first Mongolian nomads it was already very much the same in general appearance as at the present day.

Until very lately no sufficient explanation of the vast apparent interval between the two periods was ever advanced. But quite recently a number of separate observations, made by many geologists in different parts of Europe, but more especially by Mr. Sketchley in our own eastern counties, have led almost all scientific anthropologists to a new and very startling conclusion upon this difficult subject. The opinion is now daily gaining ground that the men of the Chipped Flint Period really lived before the great geological era known as the Glacial Epoch. This Glacial Epoch, as everybody knows, was the very last act in the geological drama before the curtain rose upon our own modern Europe. Certain long cycles in the earth's motion produce from time to time, at immense intervals, an oscillation of alternate warm and cold periods in the northern and the southern hemispheres respectively. After the close of the tertiary age, and immediately before the establishment of what we may call the modern constitution of Europe, one of these oscillating warm and cold periods occurred in all northern latitudes. Fields of snow covered the plains of Central Europe, while glaciers filled up the valleys of Auvergne and Brittany, of Wales and Scotland, as they now fill up those of the Alps and the Pyrenees. Then followed an alternate warm interglacial epoch, succeeded again by another frozen spell. How long ago this state of things began we cannot with certainty say, but a very moderate guess, on astronomical grounds, sets down the date of its commencement at some two hundred thousand years before the present day. Probably the last of the glacial cycles ended about a hundred thousand years since.

Now, the chipped flint weapons which were first found in the drift of the Somme at Abbeville, and which have since been discovered in our own island from the mouth of the Axe to that of the Ouse, were long supposed to be subsequent in time to this Great Ice Age. But the new

Digitized by Google

observations, of which I have spoken above, make it almost certain that they were really fashioned before the coming on of that cold period, or at least of one among its cold spells, and that the human race was driven out of Northern Europe by the irresistible onward march of the polar ice as it spread southward over the peninsulas and islands of the Atlantic. Deposits of clay, containing worn boulders and stones of the glacial age, with the characteristic scratches produced by the action of ice, have been found overlying the layer of earth in which the chipped flints are embedded. Of course the lower layer must have been deposited before the upper one; and so the inference must obviously be drawn that the chipped flints were put there first, and that the boulder clay was afterwards gathered on top of them. So, too, in caves it seems almost indubitable that certain beds of glacial origin overlie the hard concreted floor, in which the human implements and bones of extinct animals are found matted together in a solid mass by a mortar of hardened mud. Altogether, the evidence leaves us hardly any choice except to conclude that the men who lived in the caves and made the rough stone weapons of the early period belong to an age anterior to the Glacial Epoch.

If, then, we put the approximate date of the ice age at two hundred thousand years before our own time, and that of the earliest men who used polished stone implements at about ten or twelve thousand years ago, we have a sufficient interval fully to account for the immense progress which mankind had made between the first and the second of our two main periods. Let us pass on to inquire who these early Europeans were, and what manner of life they led.

We have very few materials from which to form a picture of the outward appearance of palæolithic men. So far as we know, they did not usually bury their dead in mounds, caves, or other regular sepulchres; and so we have scarcely any bones, skulls, or skeletons to flesh out into portraits of these our distinguished ancestors. Indeed, it seems not unlikely that they adopted the classical and now fashionable method of cremating their deceased relatives; or possibly they may even have cut the process short at the convenient point of roasting and eating them. Perhaps this is the reason why our distinguished archæologist, Professor Rolleston, is so uncompromising an opponent of cremation in its revived form: a fellow-feeling for antiquarians and anatomists of the ninetieth century doubtless makes him realise how inconvenient they would find it to be deprived of all skeletons of the nineteenth. At any rate, palæolithic bones are far rarer than palæolithic weapons, and only a very small number of skulls, the most important relics for reconstructing the features and appearance of our remote progenitors, have been casually discovered in Swiss or German caves. Fortunately these are sufficient to give us all the most important clues to the physiognomy and mien of their quondam possessors. Palæolithic man approximated somewhat in type to the Bushman of South Africa and the Digger Indian of California; but he was on the whole less human and more ape-like than even those most brutish of

Digitized by Google

modern savages. His forehead was villanously low and retreating, the worst existing specimen being far worse and the best a good deal better than those of the living Bushman. His jaws were more ponderous, and armed with huge canine teeth, which recall in many particulars those of the gorilla. We can hardly doubt that his skin was a deep black, though here we have only the inferential proof to be drawn from the skin of those existing savages who have departed the least from the ancestral type. And we may reasonably conjecture that his limbs and back were far hairier than is the case with any men now living. There is no reason to suppose that he was acquainted with the use of any clothing except the skins of beasts.

The flint-chippers apparently lived in natural or artificial caves only, and did not build huts or villages. At least, no trace of anything like a town of this period anywhere occurs. On the other hand, the remains found in the caves have every appearance of belonging to human habitations. The flint implements, bone needles, and ornamental necklets all seem to have been lost in the caves by people who lived there, and to be associated with the refuse of their meals. We must remember, in connection with this apparent absence of towns, that man was not yet, in all likelihood, the absolutely dominant animal that we know him to be at the present day. He did not hold the whole country side as his acknowledged hunting-ground, and rule over the beasts of the field as their undisputed lord. Rather was he one among a number of competitors, struggling hard for supremacy against the cave-lion, the mammoth, and the grisly bear. In each cave dwelt a separate family, ungoverned save by the harsh government of its father and hunter, and unbound to the inhabitants of other caves by any ties save those of a rude and half-developed barter. The size and shape of the jaws may even lead one to suppose that men still fought with one another like the higher apes, using their ponderous canine teeth as weapons of offence. But in any case we must suppose that these primitive families lived in a state of isolation more complete than even that of our modern Australians, and remained utterly unconsolidated into any form of tribe or nation.

The cave-men were by trade hunters only. Agriculture of even the rudest kind seems to have been quite unknown to them. The blackfellows of Eastern Britain and France lived mainly on the reindeer, whose bones and horns occur more frequently than any other animal remains in their caves. But the creatures which then roamed over Northern Europe belonged to two types now inhabiting widely different regions. The one type, as Sir John Lubbock has pointed out, was quite sub-arctic, and included such creatures as the extinct mammoth, the hairy rhinoceros, the arctic hare, the white fox, the reindeer, and the bison. The presence of these animals clearly shows that the general climate must have been far colder than at the present time. But, on the other hand, a sub-tropical fauna extended also into Northern Europe, and its

Digitized by Google

remains show us with equal clearness that warm periods alternated with the cold, and that the whole of our continent then formed a single continuous zoological province. Amongst these animals of warmer climates the hippopotamus ranged as far north as England; the African elephant still roamed over the cork forests of Spain and Sicily; while the hyæna, the cave-lion, and the porcupine extended over the whole of continental Europe where the relics of the early flint-weaponed men have yet been found. Mr. A. R. Wallace has shown good reasons for believing that it was the Glacial Epoch which caused the great split between the zoological belt of Northern Europe and sub-tropical Asia. The coming on of the ice age slowly killed off the Siberian mammoths, the English hippopotami, and the hairy rhinoceros. When at length the glaciers clear away and modern Europe stands before our eyes, we find it inhabited only by a smaller and more strictly Arctic fauna, while all its most gigantic mammals and most beautiful birds have been frozen out or driven southward into the warmer peninsulas of Southern Asia. The reindeer, the cave-lion, and the bear are all gone. If Mr. Wallace is right, our existing European beasts and birds represent merely the dingy survivors of a far more rich and varied type of life in the quaternary period. The ingenious naturalist attributes mainly to this cause the superiority in brilliancy and beauty of the animals which now inhabit tropical Asia and the islands of the Eastern Archipelago.

The principal weapons with which the cave-men made war upon the reindeer and the urus were the rough flint hatchets by which they are still best known. These hatchets are very irregular in shape, viewed by a modern standard; but they still show unmistakable signs of human manufacture in their rough similarity and adhesion to pattern. They are simply chipped off by a series of side-blows, and never ground to a smooth surface like the well-made celts of their late successors, the neolithic Mongolians. I need hardly say that no trace of metals occurs amongst the relics of the cave-men. Even pottery was unknown to them. But they knew how to make bone-needles, and knife-handles, and fish-hooks; and how to carve horn into really artistic shapes. It is from the caves of the south of France that the most interesting remains have been disinterred, and they show that the flint-clippers had already progressed to a high degree of culture in matters of art. Many sketches of reindeer, rudely scrawled on pieces of bone or reindeer horn, are not only drawn with considerable skill, but may even be described as spirited. One drawing of a mammoth executed on a fragment of mammoth tusk, and found in the rock shelter of La Madeleine, has been engraved several times in French and English works, being in fact the only contemporary portrait of that extinct creature now in existence. Some of the knife-handles are carved with admirable taste into animal forms, the natural shape of the original being well conventionalised so as to fit in with the use to which the handle was applied. Other marks of æsthetic feeling are shown in the accumulation

Digitized by Google

of fossils and bones for necklaces, and in the bright-coloured stones sometimes selected for the manufacture of hatchets.

Of course the presence of a proper stone for making his weapons was an absolute necessity for primæval man. Hence doubtless the reason why we find his range so curiously restricted. In our own island, for example, the relics of the cave-men are only found along the banks of our south-eastern rivers, in the region where chalk is more or less common, and where flints were consequently to be obtained in abundance. Palæolithic weapons hardly occur to the north-west of the great belt which runs obliquely across Britain from Whitby to Exeter, and separates the tertiary and secondary lowland from the primary mountain region. Nor, again, are they found in the level flats of Denmark and Sweden, where perhaps the glacial cold also prevented unclad man from making his home. But they are comparatively abundant in most chalk districts, or rather in the drift deposited by rivers whose valleys are bounded by chalk-downs.

From such rough data as these I fancy I can dimly picture to myself the life of the flint-chippers here on the banks of the Axe two hundred thousand years ago. The river then ran at a higher level than now, and had not yet cut through the greenstone of its valley to reach the red marl beneath, whose warm cliffs now brighten up the landscape at Axmouth, just opposite the little knoll on which I am at this moment seated. In two hundred thousand years even the little Axe and its tributaries have had time to wear away, particle by particle, a moderate thickness of chalk and sandstone. In the gravel beds by the seashore thus formed we find the remains of the rhinoceros and elephant. The valley in those old times must have been higher and broader; great forests must have covered either bank; and the bare chalk downs of Beer and Rowsdon must have formed the open haunts of reindeer and elk. I can fancy the little black boys creeping cautiously out of their cave at sunrise on a summer morning, and hunting for crayfish in the waters of the Axe. Lithe, naked little bodies, untattooed and wholly unadorned, they play together by the riverside, chattering a half-inarticulate speech, largely eked out by gesture and intonation. Their father sits at the mouth of the cave, slowly fashioning a bone-needle, and neatly drilling its eye with a pointed flint awl, after the painstaking and laborious manner of all savage men. The mother rubs together two pieces of wood to light the fire, and feeds it with dry sticks from the forest. Perhaps her life was not yet so complete a drudgery as that of the Digger Indian squaw or the Australian gin, for primitive man does not seem to have treated women entirely as slaves, but rather to have chosen his helpmate with some regard to personal beauty, which might argue well for her subsequent good treatment. The whole family, however, must always have had an air of timidity and a constant sense of insecurity; for the cave afforded but a precarious shelter, and danger from every side must have been a common intruder.

When the fire was lighted and the food—if there was any—rudely

Digitized by Google

cooked, the primæval breakfast must have been eaten in the darkness and gloom of the cave. Reindeer venison formed the staple substitute for butcher's meat, though doubtless a rhinoceros steak or a piece of mammoth sirloin did not come amiss when the father of the family had been in luck with his hunting. An alpine hare or a few small birds would sometimes find a place on what passed for the breakfast-table. But more often, I suspect, the household found itself restricted to raw mussels, limpets, crayfish, sea-urchins, or lob-worms. Berries, and seeds, and edible leaves, no doubt eked out the meal when hunting was bad and the father had gone out day after day in vain, bringing back with him nothing better than these vegetarian stuffs. A very hungry time they had of it, we may be pretty sure, living from day to day on game and shellfish when in luck, and often starving outright, a dozen families together, when cold weather or shortness of game cut off the supplies. On the other hand, they must have had a famous feast from time to time, when the father or the elder brothers brought home a whole reindeer, or when a whale loaded with untold blubber got stranded upon the open shingle beach at Seaton. On such occasions the whole family ate itself positively drunk, like Mr. Eyre's Australian blackfellows when he killed his horse in the extremity of famine during his journey through the untrodden bush. For though all these things happened some two hundred thousand years ago, we must never forget that man had already reached a stage of culture somewhat in advance of that which we still find amongst the lowest existing savages.

After the breakfast, scanty or abundant, has been cleared away, and the bones thrown into the corner for our future inspection, I fancy I can see the goodman of the cave taking out his hunting knife and his stone hatchet, fixed into a split wooden handle by thongs of deerskin or bast, and starting out upon his day's expedition. He goes noiselessly and cowering through the forest, afraid of rousing his game prematurely, and with a sharp eye for any stray wolverine hiding among the branches, or any crouching cave-lion ready to spring from under cover of a jungly thicket. Meanwhile I can see the squaw—or was it rather squaws? for primitive man may perhaps have been a polygamist—sitting by the mouth of the cave, also with a constant care against the wandering carnivore, rudely sewing together a mantle of skins for the shoulders of the absent lord and master. The bone needle must have had a use, and I suppose the only likely one is that of stitching together the dried deerhides with sinews or fibres. The long-haired shaggy-headed children play about hard by on the alluvial flats, making whistles out of knuckle-bones, tickling trout by the river side, and learning their future trade of flint-chippers by practice on a block of raw material from the side of Bindon Hill. At other times they search for round pebbles on the beach, fit for slingstones in size and shape; or hunt for fossils to make necklaces among the soft lias cliffs; or drill holes in small bones to string with bast into ornaments for themselves or their mothers. Traces of all these occupa-

Digitized by Google

tions we find in the caves or among the drift. Later on in the day, the father returns in triumph. He has killed a musk-ox, and all the strength of the household is called out, to drag it home, to skin it, to dry the hide, to cut up and roast the part required for immediate use, and to put away the remainder in safety. A big fire is lighted at the mouth of the cave from the embers of the morning, the joint is quickly cooked in a smoky fashion, and the whole family, not without some preliminary quarrelling, gives itself over to a mighty meal. Supper or dinner finished, the father takes out the splinter of mammoth tusk, broken from the great beast which he found dead in the forest last winter, and in the fulness of his heart sets himself to the artistic task of carving a knife-handle or scraping with a flint graver the sketch of a reindeer fight. For though these pictorial works of palæolithic man have been hitherto found in France alone, I do not know why our own extinct fellow-countrymen should not have a little credit for æsthetic handicraft as well. Perhaps the lesser number of caves and the probably greater effect of the Glacial Epoch in Britain may account for the absence of artistic remains in our English quaternary deposits.

But the glimpse of man's early condition which these drift and cave weapons give us is, after all, only a glimpse. Before the drift period stretches an unknown past, and after the drift period succeeds a half-unknown future. For evidently the men who made these well-shaped flint implements, who used these exquisitely polished bone pins, who engraved these clever and accurate pictures of reindeer and mammoths, were not the *first* men who lived upon our earth. Such considerable manual skill and such high æsthetic faculties clearly presuppose a long line of previous developments. Moreover, we know that progress was very slow in those early days, because the period covered by the chipped flints is very considerable, and yet there is very little alteration in the form of the weapons. The thickness of the drift and the cave deposit shows that the cave-dwellers must have inhabited Northern Europe for many, many centuries. Yet during all that long lapse of time they hardly progressed in arts at all. Certainly they never attained to the point of polishing their stone weapons or of moulding even the rudest hand-made pottery. Accordingly we must believe that the time which it had taken them to reach the degree of culture at which we get our glimpse of them must have been simply enormous. Humanity must have undergone a long course of slow evolution before it could produce the clever hunters and tasteful artists of the Chipped Flint Period.

When and where this previous evolution took place we can hardly yet even guess. We have been so long accustomed to look upon man as a creature of yesterday that it almost takes our breath away even to be told that he probably preceded the Glacial Epoch, some two hundred thousand years ago. But then to be asked to believe that the pre-glacial men themselves were comparatively late and half-civilised specimens of humanity is perhaps too much for our weak faith. Yet the

Digitized by Google

Abbé Bourgeois has found a clue which may possibly help to bridge over the gap and to lead us into embracing even this last and most difficult clause in the modern scientific creed. In the *calcaire de Beauce*, a French miocene stratum, the fearless Abbé has ventured to discover flint objects which he believes to be human or semi-human implements. They consist of flakes, not chipped off by a blow like the palæolithic knives, but apparently split by means of fire. Specimens of these presumed flint weapons were exhibited at the Anthropological Congress at Paris last year, and were allowed by many experts to look suspiciously like the handicraft of man. Even earlier than the Abbé Bourgeois' discovery, bones had been observed at St. Prest which appeared as though they had been cut with a sharp instrument—say a very primæval stone hatchet. But if these observations are really correct, then we must push back the first appearance of man, or at least of a weapon-making animal, far into the past of the tertiary formations. The time which elapsed between the Miocene or Pliocene periods and the days of the flint-chippers must be reckoned, in all probability, not by hundreds of thousands, but by millions of years. I cannot pretend that these data are very certain; but at any rate, when we consider the many marks of comparatively high cultivation exhibited by palæolithic man, they need not be regarded as preposterous or extravagant.

Just as we know little about the previous history of man during the time which precedes our glimpse of his existence in the palæolithic stage, so we know little about him in the long interval which separates that stage from the all but historical neolithic period. The Glacial Epoch seems to have swept away almost the whole fauna, and a large part of the flora, of Northern Europe, and with it the black-fellows who worked the flints of Axmouth and of St. Acheul. For about a hundred and fifty thousand years, roughly speaking, England and the opposite continent seem to have been uninhabited by the human race. When next we find traces of man's occupation, in the neolithic burial-grounds, man had progressed to a far higher grade of practical arts, and the face of the European fauna had entirely altered. The great river-horses, mammoths, elks, and reindeer were gone; and in their place roamed the familiar denizens of our modern forests. The Mongolian or Euskarian inhabitants were men who used exquisitely polished hatchets of greenstone, whose material was brought by a regular commerce from the distant Kuen-Lun mountains of Central Asia. They knew how to make pottery; they dwelt in regular and well-built villages; they buried their dead in splendid tumuli. They had fixed government by chieftains for whom these tumuli were raised. They had reached at least one great religious idea, that of human immortality; for beside the corpses of their chieftains they placed the weapons and ornaments which they would need in the other world. They lived mainly or entirely upon their domesticated animals, the cow, sheep, pig, and goat. They trained the dog to assist them in their hunting expeditions. They cultivated wheat and barley,

Digitized by Google

which they crushed with corn-breakers into rough meal. They even tilled flax, and wove from it coarse linen cloth. Such regular government, settled communities, fixed kingship, religious belief, domestication of animals, and advanced tillage, show of course that immense strides in civilisation had been made between the two periods. The men who came back to Northern Europe in the neolithic epoch must have been developing and improving for ages elsewhere before they could have reached so high a type of culture. We do not yet know where the intermediate stages were passed; and it may perhaps happen that no record of the passage from the chipped flint stage to the polished stone stage anywhere exists. But when the rest of the world has been as thoroughly explored as North-Western Europe, we may reasonably hope for some further light upon the intermediate steps.

Nor must we too rashly conclude that all the human beings who inhabited the earth in the pre-glacial period were as rude as those who lived here beside the valley of the Axe. Nay, there is even some reason to suppose that the civilisation of the Dordogne was then far in advance of the civilisation of the Thames. And when we remember that at the present day the culture of London, with its railways, telegraphs, and Royal Societies, coexists in time with the savagery of the naked Fuegians and the all but speechless Andamanese, we may well believe that in more southern climates the men of the pre-glacial period may have attained to a much higher degree of art and knowledge than our own northern islanders. Again, it is by no means certain that the palæolithic men of Europe were at all the ancestors of their neolithic successors. It may easily have happened that the palæolithic Europeans were entirely killed off by the Glacial Epoch, and that the neolithic men who long afterwards filled up their place were the descendants of another race which had meanwhile been developing its pastoral and agricultural arts, together with its governmental and religious ideas, in the great central table-land of Asia. But, be this as it may, we know at least that the neolithic men at their first appearance in the West had reached a high development, which presupposes an immense number of previous stages. They had progressed from the rude separate family system of pre-glacial times to the full political life of the village and the recognised king. They had passed from the separate hunting life to the nomad pastoral horde, and from that again to the settled agricultural community. It wanted but a few steps to bring them on through the bronze and iron ages to our own modern England, with its printing-presses and its telephones, its woman-suffrage associations and its anti-vaccination leagues. Strange as it sounds to say so, the interval in culture between the London of to-day and the Swiss lake-village of neolithic times is as nothing compared with the interval in culture between the Swiss lake-village and the primæval cavern. The one represents the rapid gains of a few thousand years; the other represents the slow acquisitions of as many centuries.

G. A.

Digitized by Google

The Siege of Ghuznee.

AN EPISODE OF THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR.

On June 19, 1841, my old corps, the 27th Bengal Native Infantry, marched into Ghuznee for the purpose of relieving the 16th Native Infantry, who were under orders to move to Khelat-i-Ghilzai. We were accompanied by the 5th Regiment of Light Cavalry, a couple of guns, and some Hindostani recruits for Shah Soojah's 3rd Regiment of Infantry, then in garrison at Khelat. Our march had been a long and fatiguing one. Quitting Umballa in January, we had traversed the country of the five rivers, then the kingdom of the Sikhs, and, crossing the Jhelum at the town of that name, had wound through the interminable ravines which intervene between it and Rawul Pindi; leaving Pindi behind us, we pushed slowly on to Attock, and so to Peshawur. Here we halted some days, waiting for various details for the force in Afghanistan to reach us, and it was not until May 20 that we entered the Khyber Pass. It was with no great feelings of cheerfulness that we saw the mountain barriers close out from behind us the last glimpse of Avitabele's stronghold. The prospects of active service were very remote, and our men by no means relished the idea of cantonment life so far away from the Ganges. Short leave was now to be a thing of the past, and few could indulge in the luxury of furlough with its attendant journey of 1,000 miles. At Jellalabad we halted a couple of days, reaching Cabul on June 8. The four days spent here were passed in discussing with old friends the principal events of the bloodless campaign of Afghanistan, but not a rumour did we hear of the impending troubles. All were wrapped in security, and on the morning of June 12 we marched out of Cabul with as much unconcern as if we were moving from Benares to Dinapore. Not one of us had a suspicion that in a few short weeks we should be engaged in a deadly fight for existence, or that of the thousand bayonets which now proudly glistened in the morning sun not one would ever flash again in Hindostan. So little, indeed, did the military authorities at Calcutta realise that we were even ostensibly marching on field service, that, instead of our roll of officers mustering its full twenty-four, we had with us but one lieutenant-colonel, five lieutenants, three ensigns, and an assistant-surgeon. Our major and all our captains were on furlough or on staff employ; two captains and one lieutenant were holding appointments in Afghanistan, thus there were twelve absentees, whose work we subalterns with the colours were gratuitously performing.

On the morning of June 20 we marched into the fortress of Ghuznee,

Digitized by Google

and the 16th Native Infantry marched out, encamping on the Candahar road. In a day or two, however, they left, accompanied by our late companions in arms, the 5th Cavalry, Shah Soojah's recruits, and the guns, to coerce some refractory Ghilzai tribes, whilst we reluctantly were doomed to commence the ordinary routine of cantonment work. Everything seemed so quiet and peaceable round about Ghuznee, that not even the most gloomy prophet of evil could have anticipated a few weeks would see us a beleaguered garrison. It was not until the month of September that we in Ghuznee had the smallest idea of an uneasy feeling existing in Cabul. How well do I remember the first intimation we had of a prospect of fighting, and with what pleasure it was received by us subalterns of the 27th! One of our brother officers had gone on leave to Cabul, and he sent us word of the difficulties and opposition Sale had encountered in the march from the capital to Jellalabad, and wound up his letter with "Thank goodness these politicals are evidently making a mess of it, and we shall to a certainty get some fighting at last." Just about this time Palmer, our colonel, began to be much occupied with some spy system which he had organised, and Harris, our interpreter, was for ever worrying himself over the translation of intercepted letters, which all breathed more or less of hatred to the infidels who now held Afghanistan for Shah Soojah. In these epistles we were generally described as "sugha-i kafar na bukar." * Of course the news soon leaked out among the men, but on conversing with the native officers I found that they had a supreme contempt for the Afghans, and great faith in the "iqbaul" or good fortune of the English, which they said would carry us gloriously through any undertaking. The English officers shared this feeling of indifference to the many rumours which daily flitted through the garrison, and it was not until the very end of September that we began to realise there was fighting in store for us. Then Harris, our interpreter, received a hurried note from Captain Dodgin, of the 44th Foot, postmaster at Ghuznee, saying that the whole country was up in arms, that the Afghans had joined the Ghilzais, and that an attempt would shortly be made to surprise Ghuznee. We ridiculed the idea. Our men relished it, and promised the enemy a warm reception should they attempt to molest us in our stronghold. The Colonel did not share the general contempt for our foes, and busied himself in putting the place in as thorough a state of defence as his resources would permit. A loopholed wall was built which entirely surrounded the Bala Hissar or citadel, and gave a certain amount of protection to the barracks, which were enclosed in it. A powerful gateway was constructed, flanked by two massive stone guard-houses or watch-towers. The Bala Hissar was an eminence in the western portion of the city, and the road leading up to it was thoroughly exposed from all quarters. This was now covered by a mud wall. We thus had a double line of defence: the mud wall, which encircled the base of the Bala Hissar hill, and the inner citadel itself. The

* Worthless infidels, sons of dogs.

Digitized by Google

outer line was too extended for our small garrison to defend thoroughly, yet the mere fact of there being no well in the citadel compelled us to adopt the former line, weak as we were. Our artillery consisted of six iron and brass guns of native workmanship, cunning in construction and useless in practice. There were some four 6-pounders, one iron 8-pounder, the carriage of which was in good condition, and which was indeed the only reliable piece of ordnance we had in our possession. The carriages of the others were in the most rickety condition, but our regimental armourer, under the Colonel's directions, succeeded in putting them together in a tolerably decent sort of way. In the lower fort there was a huge unwieldy 68-pounder, called by the natives Zubur Jung. The good people of Ghuznee said it had been brought to Afghanistan in the train of Nadar Shah, and they had an idea that it could throw a shot upwards of three miles. This may be so; we never tried it. In the first place we had no ammunition for it, and in the second a beneficent and thoughtful Government had not provided us with a single gunner in the garrison. Fortunately for us our Quartermaster-Sergeant Craven had formerly been in the Bengal Artillery, and he, with his usual energy, commenced to instruct all the ensigns in gun-drill. We picked up the work pretty readily, and before the end of October had imparted our knowledge to about one hundred of our men, the Colonel with much forethought having detailed twelve men from each company to learn artillerymen's work. In addition to these precautions, the Colonel did not neglect the commissariat, but succeeded in laying in a stock of provisions which should have lasted our garrison six months on full rations. These were stored in the citadel, and orders were given that they were not to be drawn upon until we should be unable to obtain supplies from the city. It was computed that in the bazaar there was more than a year's supplies easily obtainable. Those stored in the citadel consisted of flour, ghee (clarified butter), salt, pulse, and a great quantity of unground corn. Unfortunately we had very few hand-mills, and the consequence was, that, when we were reduced to half rations, the Hindoo soldiers and camp followers got only the corn which they were unable to grind, and so merely ate it parched, which seriously affected their health. As far as food was concerned we never had any cause to grumble. It is true that our flour was not over-sweet, and that meat was scarce and often not obtainable. Our great hardship was the scarcity of water. The one well was not a particularly good one, and often was dry for several consecutive hours. This was severely felt by all ranks, and was an evil no fortitude could bear up against. It is true there was another well in the upper citadel, near our magazine, but it never had any water, though of immense depth, and it was useless our endeavouring to sink another through the rocky soil of the Bala Hissar when once disturbances commenced. Even after this lapse of time I cannot but wonder at the criminal incompetence of the military authorities at Cabul, who left a garrison in Ghuznee in 1839 unprovided

Digitized by Google

with artillery, and with an insufficient water supply. They surely knew we were living on a powder magazine which at any hour might explode, and yet they took no steps to guard against fire. Even when the first whisper of insurrection was heard at Cabul they might have spared us fifty gunners and a supply of ammunition wherewith we could have made some show of defence with our artillery, and even a section of Engineers would have enabled us to have strengthened our defences, to have sunk a well, and mayhap to have emulated Khelat-i-Ghilzai in the brilliancy of our defence. But no! a thorough state of listlessness pervaded the minds of the superior officers at Cabul, lulled into a false sense of security by the incompetent political officers, who in their turn were beguiled by the specious lies of the wily Afghans. No attempts were made to warn out-stations of the impending danger, or to suggest even that precautions for defence should be undertaken. Our first intimation that any mischief was brewing was in a private letter, and it was but natural that the Colonel should have hesitated before acting upon it. The month of October was passed by us in making what defensive preparations we could, although I believe our efforts were regarded with indifference, if not with scorn, by the authorities in Cabul.

On November 5 the storm broke, and we then found ourselves face to face with a foe whose avowed determination was the utter extermination of every British servant in the country. We saw our fate clearly now; between us and succour lay the inhospitable mountain ranges of the Sufaid Koh, beyond that the dreary plains of the Punjaub, so that it would be fully six months ere a man or gun from Hindostan could come to our assistance. For these six months we were thrown entirely on our resources. Every man in Afghanistan was our avowed enemy. We were not the only besieged place. Candahar, Khelat-i-Ghilzai to the south, Cabul and Jellalabad to the north, were likewise surrounded. Help from any of them was impossible; we all felt that each and all of us must do our utmost, fighting steadily until relief from India should arrive. It was not until November 5 that we awoke to the real peril of our position. Two or three days previously a Captain Woodburn passed through Ghuznee, in command of a body of about 150 men from the Candahar garrison, *en route* for Cabul and Hindostan. He encamped for the night in the fort of a Tajik chief named Gool Mahomed, at Syudabad. Woodburn was a gallant, accomplished gentleman, and a brave and skilful officer. He took the usual precautions, closed the gates of the fort, placed a guard of his own men there—an act which we afterwards learned irritated Gool Mahomed immensely. He also wished to quarter a guard in each of the four raised bastions of the fort—for it must be known that every Afghan fort consists of a square building, with thick mud walls, generally from 15 to 20 feet high, and that at each corner a circular tower is constructed, which gives a flanking fire to all faces, and commands the whole of the interior. Woodburn's wish to hold these bastions was overruled. Gool Mahomed urged

Digitized by Google

that his womenkind inhabited the towers, and that he could not turn them out without great inconvenience. Woodburn, feeling that after all he was a guest, that his suspicions might be groundless, reluctantly gave way. Fatal indecision! In the dead of night Gool Mahomed threw down ropes from the towers, and quietly gave admittance to a large body of Tajiks and Ghilzais, who suddenly opened a terrible fire on the sepoys sleeping in the square below. Woodburn hastily rallied his men, and returned the fire as well as he was able; but his opponents were under cover, his own men fearfully exposed and suffering heavily. He then resolved to die bravely in the open; so, throwing open the gateway, he charged the hordes outside. Bravely did his sepoys fight their way through, but the odds were too great against them. Woodburn himself performed prodigies of valour, but fell at last, pierced by a dozen bullets, when his body was straightway hacked to pieces and torn limb from limb. Of his party some twenty managed to escape, bringing us the sad tidings of our friend's gallant death. Many of these poor fellows were wounded; one, I well remember, had been shot through both thighs, yet had contrived to drag his weary body some forty-five miles. Thus was brought suddenly home to us, by the arrival of this crippled remnant of Woodburn's party, the undoubted fact that we were face to face with a rebellion which was rapidly passing through the length and breadth of the land. A settled gloom now appeared to hover over our garrison; not that the men in any way feared the result of an appeal to arms, for they seemed to have a profound contempt for the Afghans, who hitherto had not shown themselves formidable enemies in the field, but there appeared a general distrust of the senior authorities at Cabul.

Under the colonel's instructions we now set to work to improve our defences. As our adjutant was a man of indomitable perseverance and energy, his enthusiasm pervaded the usually listless sepoys, and they nobly seconded him in his earnest efforts to render our position impregnable. The sergeant-major had been a mason or bricklayer by trade, and he very readily imparted his knowledge to the now willing men, who really succeeded in turning out some very creditable work. Our efforts, however, were but half-hearted, for our position, it was evident, was absolutely untenable; we were completely commanded by the Bahlool hill, which was within easy matchlock range, and we had but one well, which only supplied sufficient water for 100 men. We felt, then, that, although we could easily repel any attack made on us, we should be quite unable to withstand a siege. The cold in the month of November was intense; our thermometer, which only read to 14° below zero, frequently marked that intensity of frost, and doubtless the temperature often sank below that. Our men, inhabitants of Oude, felt the climate terribly; many, very many, died of frost-bite, of diseases of the lungs engendered by insufficiency of clothing or exposure. There is no doubt that the Indian Government was greatly to blame in not having made arrangements for the proper equipment of the sepoys prior to leaving Hindostan; their

Digitized by Google

pay was utterly inadequate to enable them to provide themselves with warm uniform, and we were doubtful how to act in the matter, for fear that Government would repudiate the expenditure incurred on that account.

Although no overt act of hostility towards our garrison had yet been perpetrated before the middle of November, we were virtually in a state of siege. More than one of us had been fired at when riding in the vicinity of the city; so the colonel very wisely issued an order that no officer or man was to leave the walls without express permission, and then only in parties and well armed. As this naturally entailed extra work on the men, who were numbed by cold and the severe night duty which necessarily fell upon them, we determined to second the colonel's wishes, and none even applied for the leave. Early in November we learned by a secret messenger that a brigade under Lieutenant-Colonel Maclaren, of the 16th Native Infantry, was marching up to the assistance of the troops in Cabul, and that he had instructions to co-operate with a flying column from Colonel Palmer's garrison in clearing the Ghuznee district of disaffected bands. This news was confirmed by the attitude displayed by the country people. On all sides we saw bodies of the enemy assembling in the plains below us, but ever beyond the reach of our cannon, and never near enough for us to have had a chance of meeting them in a hand-to-hand encounter. The news of Colonel Maclaren's arrival at Mukoor, only eighty miles or a week's march from us, was eagerly received by our men, who evinced the utmost keenness to move out to join him. I believe the colonel was much in favour of a diversion in rear of the armed bands who had evidently marched down to oppose Maclaren's advance, but here he was hampered by the fact that he had none but subaltern officers in his garrison; he could well have spared 400 men, confining the remainder of the garrison in the citadel, but to send such a party under a young subaltern was a risk he wisely determined not to run. I cannot blame him, and yet how different our winter might have been had the adjutant been permitted to move with a wing down along the Candahar road! Days passed by, and yet no further news of Maclaren; our immediate vicinity was clear of rebels, who had all marched down to oppose him, and we were once more free to ride over the snow-clad plain, or, what was still more enjoyable, to skate on the ice of the ditch. In this pastime Mrs. Lumsden was no mean proficient, and for a few days we banished dull care, took our luncheons down to the city wall, and then, in presence of the astounded Afghans and wonder-stricken sepoys, amused ourselves to our hearts' content. Even the staid old colonel used to come down to watch his youngsters disporting themselves on the ice; but he always seemed oppressed with the weight of his responsibility, and was certainly dreadfully hampered in having no senior officer in whom he could confide, or with whom he could converse as an equal. We were all boys, as it were, loyal, willing to do our duty, fond of our chief, and proud of our regiment, still lads so much his junior that his position was unique, and one

Digitized by Google

in which no man should have been placed. The enemy now having completely disappeared from our neighbourhood, the colonel determined on destroying a village called "Hakim Sunaee-ke-Killah," which was within musket-shot of the walls of the city, and was well known to be a meeting-place for disaffected spirits. This was carried out without opposition, the walls of the village being razed to the ground, as well as those which enclosed a tomb between the village and Ghuznee. The days now began to drag wearily along. The very anxiety with which we waited and watched for Maclaren's force only added to the miseries of our situation, and we were at a loss to account for his delay. Tidings from him we had none; messenger after messenger was sent out, yet never returned, and we at last began to fear that the fate which befell Woodburn's party must have overtaken his. At last we heard that he felt himself too weak to push on to Ghuznee, and, having reached a point only fifty miles from us, had fallen back on Khelat-i-Ghilzai. The effect of this news was apparent in our men. They knew full well that they had as little to hope for from the Afghans as we had, but until now they had the most implicit faith in our ability to pull through all difficulties, and the advent of Maclaren's force was hailed by them as an opportunity for clearing the city of our enemies, destroying all the hostile villages in our immediate neighbourhood, and reading the Afghans such a lesson as to compel them to respect our position until the arrival of spring and fresh troops from Hindostan. The men were shrewd enough to know that, drilled and equipped as we were, the Afghans had no chance with us in the open field, but that, cooped up in a fortress dominated by the fatal Bahlool hill, surrounded by a city filled with fanatics, with but a limited supply of water, the task of starving us into submission was no difficult one. The Colonel, on finding all hope of succour from Maclaren's force must be abandoned, and that we should be compelled to fight the good fight unaided, resolved on clearing the city of all its Afghan and Parseevan inhabitants, leaving only the Hindoo shopkeepers in the place. This step was impressed upon him by the native officers, who foresaw the danger that existed in the proximity of the city to our walls. The Afghan Sirdars, several of whom professed themselves as most friendly to us, strongly opposed the measure, and urged that its adoption would infallibly cause even the well-disposed to turn against us. In this dilemma the Colonel appealed to headquarters; from the General he received permission to act as he thought fit, from the Envoy the most positive instructions to do nothing that would irritate the townspeople. Thus Palmer was powerless to carry out what he knew to be a most necessary measure for our safety, and had to content himself with issuing various orders for the guidance of the townspeople in the case of an *émeute* and for the better government of the bazaar. These were translated into Persian by Harris, our interpreter, and, being pasted on boards, were hung up in conspicuous places. They were to the effect that all well-disposed persons were to shut themselves up in their houses at dusk, at which time all shops

Digitized by Google

were to be closed, and that the firing of guns at all times was strictly forbidden.

On November 20 the enemy once more appeared on the scene, hovering round the city in great numbers. Our guards at the gateway were doubled, and each placed under a British officer; the orders were strict that no armed man was to be permitted to enter the place, and any bodies of men approaching within range were to be fired at. John Nicholson was one of our best shots, and daily he used to knock over one or more of the enemy with a long-barrelled jezail he had bought in the city. Davis was another good hand at this sort of work, and as it was congenial sport for youngsters we were enabled to keep the foe at arm's length. Now that the enemy had reappeared, our duty became very heavy. All of the officers, with the exception of the colonel, the adjutant, and the doctor, were placed on nightly duty, and during the day three were invariably posted at each of the gateways. In spite of the vigilance exercised, we had every reason to believe that arms were smuggled into the city by the long-robed Afghan women; indeed, this was confirmed by the Hindoo traders. One of these men, very shortly after the reappearance of the enemy, disclosed to the colonel a plan for the capture of the place, which he had overheard. It was to the effect that a heavy attack was to be made on the three gateways simultaneously on an early night, and that, whilst our attention was diverted by these endeavours, a strong party of Ghazees were to rush at the south-east bastion, where we had a native officer's party. The townspeople from within were to co-operate with their brethren from without, overpower the guard, lower ropes over the walls, and admit the enemy by this means. For some days additional precautions were taken, though I believe the colonel did not place much reliance on the Khuttree's word; these were soon after relaxed, and the usual jemadar's party manned the bastion. Night alarms now were frequent. On one occasion a Ghazee crept unobserved to the Cabul gateway, and fired through an aperture in the postern at Harris, who was sitting reading by a small lamp. A sepoy sitting beside Harris was wounded; and the Afghan, though followed by a volley of balls, ran away shouting joyously. A few nights after Harris's adventure, when Poett was on duty, some men rushed up with bundles of firewood, which, in spite of the fusillade opened on them, they succeeded in kindling. The gate was nearly consumed; but, contrary to expectation, no assault was delivered. Our strength now was about 1,500 men, including camp followers; of these nearly one half were made up of details of Shah Soojah's forces, our own regiment numbering nearly 800. The total number of British officers was eleven; for Burnett and Crawfurd had deemed it unadvisable to proceed to Cabul, which they at one time thought of doing.

On December 10 we had a heavy fall of snow, which continued for some hours. Up to this time we had once or twice been favoured with slight falls, which whitened the ground; but now it lay thick all around

Digitized by Google

us, we were in hopes that the severity of the weather would compel the bands of Ghazees to disperse. But they became more defiant than ever, and we had now to open fire on them with our badly served artillery. Still, the moral effect of the heavy shot had the effect of keeping them out of range during the day. On the afternoon of December 16 it became evident a serious attack was intended. The enemy collected in thousands on all sides; their drums beating, soornaies playing, flags waving; and all these symptoms of defiance being answered from the city made us see the indecision of the colonel in not having cleared out the hornet's nest from our midst. As it became dusk the Hindoo camp followers began crowding up from the city to the citadel, and it was clear that they thought mischief was rapidly brewing. There was little doubt about it. Shots from without were answered by shots from within; and our sergeant-major, a thoughtful and gallant soldier, sent down several loads of spare ammunition to the various guards. Darkness rapidly closed in, and by 7 p.m. the whole city was in an uproar. Shortly after that hour a heavy attack was made on the water-gate, held by a company under one who made a European reputation for himself in the stirring days of the mutiny, but who now was a tall, pleasing lad, full of enthusiasm and undeniably gallant—I speak of John Nicholson. For upwards of an hour did the fight rage hotly at this point. Our men, however, were well commanded by a cool, determined soldier; they in their turn were not to be outdone in coolness, and they fired slowly and steadily in reply to the hail of bullets which rattled on to the parapets and gateway. Almost every shot of ours told; and finally, defeated on every point, the discomfited Ghazees drew back, carrying nearly all their killed with them. Repulsed at this quarter, an attack was immediately developed on the south-eastern bastion, and here the enemy within showed themselves. Our brave jemadar fought desperately. His men seconded his efforts; but they were taken in reverse by a sharp fire from the treacherous Ghuzneevides, and finally driven from their post. Ladders were now let down by some Parseevans, and the enemy poured in over the parapet in immense numbers. The colonel, hearing of the loss of this important post, sent two companies, barely numbering 100 men, to retake it at the point of the bayonet. The approach, however, was so narrow, that not more than two men could walk abreast on the slippery parapet; and though Captain Poett, bravely aided by Williams, Davis, and Crawfurd, again and again dashed at the enemy, it was all of no avail—the odds were too great. Our sepoys fought nobly; but they were exposed to a flank fire from the roofs of the houses in the city, which galled them severely. Poett saw the feat was impossible, yet, in obedience to orders, repeated his attacks incessantly until dawn broke, when, himself wounded, finding all his officers had been struck down, and his party much reduced in strength, he withdrew under cover of some buildings, and, having barricaded and loopholed them, kept up a sharp fire on the enemy in the bastion. At dawn,

Digitized by Google

Nicholson was recalled from the water-gate, and traversed the streets of the city without sustaining much loss. It was not till the afternoon that Captain Poett was enabled to draw off his three companies from the position they had taken up after the unsuccessful attack on the south-east bastion, and it was only effected with great difficulty and with the exercise of much ingenuity, the party having to cut their way through from house to house, breaking down the mud walls with their bayonets. All the dead were left behind; but their arms and accoutrements were brought off, as were also the wounded. Our loss on this eventful night was four officers, sixty-three men killed and wounded, nearly all the casualties having occurred in Nos. 1, 2, and 4 companies.

The town now was in the hands of the enemy, and our surrender a matter of days. The men were told off into three watches, and during the eight hours of duty remained armed and accoutred, half being in the lower, half in the upper fort. The British officers, I may say, were on standing guard. There were eleven of us, including the colonel, adjutant, and assistant-surgeon. Of the remaining eight, Burnett and Crawfurd did not belong to the 27th, but they nevertheless cheerfully accepted duty as regimental officers, and soon earned the love and confidence of our men by their cool cheery behaviour under the most trying circumstances, and by the trouble they took to save the sepoys any extra labour. Three officers were daily detailed to the charge of the barracks and loopholed walls of the lower town, three more for the citadel and open parade-ground in front of the Dewan Khana, and one was permanently stationed at the outpost recaptured by Lumsden's company after the fall of the city. So it will be seen that our men had their hands full. We now were regularly besieged, and it was evident from the conduct of the inhabitants of the city that nothing short of our annihilation would satisfy the fanatics fighting against us. All day long, long strings of animals laden with bundles, household goods, and veiled women, were to be seen wending their way out of the gates, whilst pouring in as steadily were groups of armed men bent on our destruction. On December 19 the winter regularly set in with the usual Afghan severity. For some days it snowed incessantly, and when these storms ceased a keen, bitterly piercing wind arose, which seemed to benumb every limb. Our men, chiefly Hindostanis from Oude, felt the climate terribly; numbers perished from frost-bite or lung diseases; some even were frozen on their posts, and in order to lessen the exposure it was found advisable to relieve our sentries every hour. In addition to the climatic exposure, our men suffered terrible hardships owing to want of water. We had but one well; the springs feeding it were by no means sufficient for our needs, and we found that towards midday it generally ran dry. We were therefore reluctantly compelled to limit the allowance drawn by the men, and a guard was stationed over it with strict orders to permit no one to draw more than one *tota* full (about a quart) in the day. For cooking and

Digitized by Google

washing purposes melted snow was used, but the men felt the want of the precious liquid terribly; but bore up uncomplainingly, and cheerfully performed the heavy duties exacted from them. There was an anxious desire to maintain the good name of the 27th Native Infantry, and although there was a general feeling of disgust at the manner in which we had apparently been left to our fate, yet there was still a vague, indefinable hope that succour would at last arrive so as to save us from the disgrace of surrender. Alas! these hopes were short-lived. A day or two before the close of the year, the colonel received a note from Ghuznee, either from Pottinger or Conolly, informing us of the murder of Sir William McNaghten, and that an agreement had been entered into with the chiefs for the evacuation of the country, in conformity with which we should be compelled to surrender Ghuznee. We also heard the same day of the gallant death of a brother officer, Lieutenant H. Laing, who was killed in action at the capture of the village of Beymurroo in the preceding month. No details of the fight in which Laing lost his life were furnished us, nor did we learn more of the Cabul tragedies. The colonel called us all into the mess-room, and read out the note, which I well remember was on a small scrap of paper about three inches square. He briefly added: "I fear, gentlemen, we shall eventually have to conform to the terms of the treaty which Sir W. McNaghten entered into with the Afghans, but in the present state of affairs, snow-bound as we are, it is impossible for us to carry it into execution; I can only trust in you to maintain the honour of our good name until I am compelled to surrender the fortress." This news was most disheartening to all of us, yet it was absolutely necessary to keep it both from the enemy and from our own men, who were still bearing up wonderfully. No attempts were made to assault our position; had there been, we should have inflicted grievous loss on the foe, and mayhap have staved off the ignominy of our surrender, but the Afghans were too wary to meet us in the open field. Desultory firing went on, in which Nicholson distinguished himself as an excellent shot. Scarcely a day passed in which he did not bag some half-dozen men to his own jezail, but unfortunately we on our side had also daily to lament the death or wounds of one or more of our men.

On January 9 the fatal news could no longer be withheld; we received that evening direct orders from the general to evacuate the place.

The letter was very curiously worded, and some doubts were expressed as to its authenticity. The order for us to leave behind such "stores as we could not conveniently carry" was a grave satire on our position, for in obedience to previous orders from Cabul we had sent all our baggage animals, camels, yaboos, and ponies to that city, the only beasts we possessed being our own horses, those of the Shah's cavalry, and twelve watercarriers' bullocks. It was abundantly evident that the letter was dictated by the Afghan chiefs themselves, and only signed under compulsion by the General; so manifest was this, and so con-

Digitized by Google

vinced were we of our ability to hold our own throughout the winter, that Alston was commissioned by all of us to beg the Colonel to decline to comply with the instructions received, under the well-known military custom that the General, in signing the order, was virtually a prisoner, and therefore incapable of command. These representations unfortunately had no effect, and by the middle of January Colonel Palmer was deep in negotiations with the chiefs. Harris, the interpreter, was now well to the front, translating and re-translating treaties, and on January 20 a cessation of hostilities was determined on. From that date we commenced paying the enemy a large sum, about 900 rupees per diem, and guaranteed to cease firing on the city; in return for this they sent us in meat, fowls, water, and vegetables, tobacco, and rice, and retained the privilege of potting at anybody they could get a chance at. The negotiations, however, progressed but slowly, but towards the end of February we were summarily warned by the chiefs that they could no longer restrain the Ghazees who thirsted for our blood, and that a British officer must be handed over to them as a hostage for the prompt fulfilment of the agreements already drafted. It was on February 23 that the new governors, one of them being Shumsoodeen Khan, a nephew of Dost Mahomed, arrived from Cabul. Although we knew that their entrance into the city was but the immediate prelude to our surrender, it was impossible to avoid laughing at the grotesque appearance these men presented as they rode through the Cabul gateway; they were accompanied by a large retinue of Afghans, who were dressed in scarlet coats, cocked hats, epaulets, full-dress staff officer's pantaloons, and other uniforms or mufti garments—the plunder of our camp at Cabul. The Colonel sent one of our Mahomedan non-commissioned officers, who was a good Persian scholar, to welcome them and present them with robes of honour, and small gifts such as watches, telescopes, and pistols. Shumsoodeen speedily let us feel how completely we were in his power, for scarcely a day passed without his sending fresh demands to the Colonel for more gifts, which our Tosha Khana really was not in a position to afford. On February 27 the final treaty was entered into, and, in accordance with an additional article demanded by the chiefs, Harris, our interpreter, was handed over to them as a hostage for the due performance of the terms by us.

On the morning of the 28th Harris left us, and right sorry were we to lose him. However, there was small leisure for repining, as we were now compelled to make every preparation for the coming move, which I candidly confess was looked upon with aversion and suspicion by all. In the evening we had a line from Harris, saying he had been received with every mark of consideration and respect, and that the Sirdars were most civil to him. The following week we were busily employed taking an inventory of the stores, which we were about to hand over, selecting the best firearms for our own retention, and making such arrangements as we were able for our sustenance in the city. On March 5 we were told that the

Digitized by Google

Colonel was to remain with a small escort in Lumsden's outpost, but that the rest of us were to be scattered over the city. We demurred to this, but unfortunately the Colonel gave in, and so many lives were lost which I have no doubt we might have saved had we remained *en masse*. The Sirdars of course recognised the advisability of scattering us as much as possible, and as the Colonel did not feel disposed to discuss the question we were forced to yield. On March 6, all preparations were ready. The charges of the guns in the citadel were drawn. One party of Jezailehu were admitted to take over charge of the ammunition, small arms, treasure, &c., and a second was drawn up in front of the Dewan Khana in order to protect us from the fanaticism of the Ghazees, who, in defiance of the stipulations of the treaty, flocked into the citadel in great numbers, and used the most threatening gestures towards us. There was a strong disposition among our men to clear the citadel of these rascals, and a word from the Colonel would have sent us with fixed bayonets at them; but he seemed too dejected to do anything, and, in answer to our protestations that the treaty was being deliberately infringed, begged us not to accelerate hostilities, but to urge our men to take up the quarters assigned to them quietly and submissively. Reluctantly we obeyed his orders, and moved down into the city amidst the jeers of the Afghans and Ghazees. It was quite clear that the chiefs with difficulty restrained these villains from attacking us, and we all experienced a feeling of relief when we found ourselves clear of the place and unattacked. My men were located near the Abdoolhug Mosque, and after seeing them in their quarters I sought out Poett, and we determined to share a room together. Little did we sleep that night; there was a busy roar to be heard in the direction of the citadel, which was dotted over with fires, in front of which ever and anon would flit the weird forms of the Ghazees, who even now were quarrelling over their spoil and laying plans for our annihilation. One of the native officers crept in and told us that he had heard we were to be attacked on the morrow, and begged Poett to turn the tables on the enemy by making a counter-stroke on them at once. It was, however, impossible to reach the Colonel, and, even had we reached him, I feel sure he would never have sanctioned such an attempt. His main idea was faithfully and honourably to fulfil his part of the agreement and leave the Sirdars to bear the moral obloquy of violating theirs! As dawn broke we were startled by a gun from the citadel, followed by another and yet another. It was some short time before we could distinguish on whom the cannonade was directed. That the guns were shotted was evident, and that the missiles were not falling near us was equally clear. There was a faint attempt at a musketry reply to the artillery, but it was very spasmodic. As the sun rose and the citadel stood out clear and bold above us, all doubt, if any had ever existed in our minds, was now removed; the Ghazees had obtained possession of the guns, and had opened fire on Lumsden's outpost, in which the Colonel had been quartered by order of the Sirdars. Not content with this, bodies of Ghazees from

Digitized by Google

every conceivable quarter opened a hot musketry fire on our men wherever they appeared. Poett assumed command of our two companies, and succeeded in inflicting heavy loss on our assailants, but we were quite unable all that day to do more than hold our own. We heard, indeed, that the Colonel had sent a message to Harris in which he directed that officer to point out to the Sirdars that they had infringed the treaty, but in reply Harris said that Shumsoodeen would do nothing to stop the massacre unless all the British officers were surrendered. To this an indignant rejection was sent. As night fell the firing ceased, and we set to work to strengthen our position. The Colonel, however, once more opened negotiations through Harris, and offered almost any terms if the Sirdars would only restrain the Ghazees. An order was circulated that night, desiring the sepoys to give up their money to the Colonel; acknowledgments were of course given to them, but to the majority of the officers it appeared hard that the 15,000 rupees collected in the regiment should be paid to the treacherous Sirdars for what we all felt must be but a temporary cessation of hostilities. The colonel seemed to have lost all hope and all heart; he offered to sacrifice everything if only we were guaranteed a safe conduct to Peshawur. But of what avail were guarantees from such men as the chiefs, who had already forsworn themselves? Our Mahomedan servants and followers now deserted—nay, we urged them to leave us as the only means of saving their lives. On the 8th the firing continued, and poor Burnett, who, as usual, was acting as if he belonged to the regiment, was shot in the head, losing an eye. It was now seen that the Afghans were joining with the Ghazees in firing on us, and the fighting became incessant. Poor Mrs. Lumsden, who was dressed in her husband's clothes in order to facilitate her escape from the house where she was in hiding, was killed together with her husband. Poett also was badly wounded. Our casualties in native ranks were extremely heavy; in fact our total losses to-day must have exceeded 100. Repeated communication now took place between the colonel and Harris, and at last, as the only means of saving our lives and those of our men, it was determined that we should surrender unconditionally; and on March 10, just as the Afghans were preparing to fire into the outpost with the 68-pounder, the surrender was completed, and we all were marched up to Harris's room in the Bala Hissar, where now were the Colonel, Captains Burnett, Poett, and Alston, Dr. Thomson, and Lieutenants Harris, Crawfurd, Williams, Nicholson, and Davis. The men of the regiment were handed over to the people of the city. Some few escaped by night, and made their way to Khelat or Cabul, but nearly all who attempted this feat died on the way. Many were stripped, beaten, and, on refusing to become Mahomedans, were killed by the Ghazees. This was in direct violation of the last treaty, by which it was enacted that the men were to be quartered in the lower fort. They were, however, never brought there, and we were powerless to save them.

How wearily the days passed away none can imagine who have not

Digitized by Google

gone through a similar anxiety. Eagerly we strained our ears to catch the slightest morsel of intelligence from our guards, but their cautiousness was most commendable, and we learned nothing. Hope of succour from Cabul of course we had none, and the unaccountable retirement of Maclaren's brigade did not encourage us in expecting aid from the direction of Candahar; but as April drew on we still hoped that aid might reach us from India. The news of the Cabul massacre must have reached the Governor-General in January, and we had faith enough in British energy to know that prompt steps would be taken to avenge British disaster. We were not treated badly, though we were watched with the utmost care. Relaxation or amusements we had none. At one time we tried to make a pack of cards, but all appetite for whist had died out; and the close confinement, indifferent food, and bad water were rapidly telling on our constitutions. The courtyard of the Bala Hissar was daily crowded with men of various tribes, whom the Nawab had enlisted into his pay—wild, fierce-looking men they were, with their dark chogas, wisp of indigo cloth tied round their head for a turban, long matted hair, shaven upper lip, and straggling beard; well armed, too, were these men with choora or knife, sword, and matchlock. One tribe in particular, I remember, was pointed out to us—the Zadurranis, who were said to be a section of Ghilzais, and had the reputation of being man-eaters. Our visitors, Afghan-like, never tired of relating stories of their own prowess, and of the victories they had achieved over our countrymen throughout the length and breadth of their land. Cut off as we were from all news, it was hard to discriminate truth from falsehood, and often we were fain to believe that our troops at Candahar and Jellalabad had been put to the sword, and that the only English alive in Afghanistan were the hostages at Cabul and ourselves. In April our gaolers were changed, and we were warned to prepare ourselves for a march to the capital; but first of all we were told that we must pay sixty rupees to each man of the escort who was to accompany us. This amounted to about 30,000 rupees, and the colonel agreed with us that this was but another attempt to extort money, and declined to listen to any such proposal; on receiving this answer we were told that we should be blown away from guns—a pleasing prospect, truly! Our life now was not a pleasant one; in addition to danger from without, we had bickerings within. One of our youngsters had been rather indiscreet in pecuniary affairs prior to leaving India, and had been placed in Coventry by some of the seniors during the march up. When once the siege commenced, many of us thought his punishment had lasted long enough, and that, in face of imminent death, we should forget and forgive the past. Unfortunately, this feeling was not unanimous, and our gaolers were not slow to see that one of our number was not one of us. They accordingly removed him from our apartments, and endeavoured to extract from him the truth as to our means; he was loyal enough at first, and strenuously denied that we had any money. On this he was put to the torture, and we could hear his shrieks as these

Digitized by Google

ruffians amused themselves by poking him with red-hot ramrods. This was too much for his fortitude, and he then stated that one of us—his principal enemy—was well able to give drafts on India for the sum. On this the incorrigible young vagabond was released, and came with a shamefaced air back to us. It was not for some days that we realised what his misdeeds amounted to; but, on a further demand being made for money, —— was led out and told that, unless he gave a draft on some bankers in Lahore for 30,000 rupees, he should be put to death. In vain he pleaded inability; he was soon subjected to the same torture as his accuser, who doubtless derived much gratification on hearing the curses and imprecations with which the red-hot ramrods were welcomed. At last the colonel gave his word that the captain was not in a position any more than any other of us to give the required draft, and so he was at last released. This conduct on the part of the impecunious ensign did not tend to make his life more pleasant to him, and, if unpleasant to him, it was equally so to us, who felt there should in our trouble be a bond of sympathy which should obliterate all little feelings of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. Having failed to exact money in this way, the wretches now determined to try the effect of cruel torture on the poor colonel, who, they imagined, was immensely rich. They further conceived the idea that he had secreted his treasure either in the upper fort or else in the city of Ghuznee, and they were determined to find out the exact locality and divide it among themselves. Day after day did these ruffians demand the treasure. "Money! money! money!" was ever their cry; in vain did we assure them, on our honour as British officers, that every rupee we had had been given up to them on the surrender, with the exception of a small amount retained by each officer as subsistence allowance. Our word was disbelieved, and we were repeatedly threatened with torture. At last, on April 21, during the temporary absence of Shumsoodeen at Cabul, our gaoler, his *locum tenens*, a villain named Khan Mahomed, entered our apartments, accompanied by a number of armed men. He again demanded money, which we solemnly swore we did not possess; his followers then seized the Colonel, bound his arms behind him, and lashed his foot tightly to a split tent-peg which they drove into the ground; by driving wedges into the head of the peg they caused such a strain on the tendons of the foot and ankle that the colonel fainted. Whilst on the ground in this pitiable condition, Khan Mahomed kicked and abused the colonel to such an extent, and flew into such a towering rage with us all, that I fully thought his next act would be to butcher us all round. Harris, however, who retained great calmness and presence of mind, turned on our persecutors, and said that such conduct as they were guilty of was cowardly as well as faithless; that they had sworn solemnly to conduct us safely to Cabul; that they knew full well we had sworn our money had all been given to them, and as British officers we were unlikely to swear to an untruth, and roundly abused them for their cowardly villany. Khan Mahomed retaliated by

Digitized by Google

saying that there was no necessity for keeping an oath made to an infidel, and that as for our words he disbelieved them. Some of us in the meantime endeavoured to recover the colonel, and on his coming round he agreed to write a letter to the Political Officer at the capital, begging him to send a certain sum to Khan Mahomed. This was written in English and Persian, and as the ruffian took it, with a malignant leer, he said, "If this fails, you shall all be blown away from guns," adding a few choice words of Afghan abuse, which we by this time were well acquainted with. During the next few days we heard of the death of the Shah Soojah. And now our gaolers apparently desired to add suffocation to our other trials, for they blocked up the one window in our room, so that the only fresh air we obtained was through the chinks of the door. Those who have spent a summer in Afghanistan may realise what our sufferings now were. Day followed day in hideous monotony, night succeeded night, yet brought with it no rest for the weary body, no relief to the overstrained mind. Any day, we felt, might be our last, and often and often many of us longed and prayed that the end might come. At last, towards the end of June, some amelioration took place in our treatment. One Gool Mahomed, a brother of Shumsoodeen, returned from Cabul, and assumed charge of us; he reopened our window, obtained the services of one of our old kitmudgars to cook for us, and permitted us to walk for an hour daily on the roof of our house. This last was a luxury we much prized—never shall I forget the first few draughts of fresh air as I emerged from our fœtid prison-house. Gool Mahomed also sent us some few books which had been saved from the general loot of our effects, a volume of Cowper's poems, and Moore, and Harris's Bible and prayer-book being amongst them. I think there were only five in all, but the eagerness with which they were welcomed may be imagined when it is remembered that for three months we had not been able to read a line. But though Gool Mahomed did his best to lighten our troubles, he encountered much opposition, and not all his influence could procure us some medicine when Davis sickened with a severe attack of typhus fever. All the doctors' drugs had gone in the general loot, and so he was quite dependent on the generosity of the Afghans for even the simplest remedies. Vain to trust in the generosity of a Pathan! They simply scoffed at our entreaties, laughed at our endeavours to soothe the sufferings of our fever-stricken comrade. All that lay in our power we did, but after a week's illness, on the very anniversary of our march into Ghuznee, poor Davis died.

Our treatment after this sad occurrence varied; at one time we met with kindness, even condescension, at another with harshness and rigour. Whenever news arrived of any success obtained by our forces, our gaolers would clamour for certificates showing that their conduct towards us had been uniformly civil. As June passed away, and the crops in the fertile valleys around us ripened, we once more began to indulge in hopes that our troops would shortly advance to our rescue.

Digitized by Google

By lying awake at night and listening to the conversations of our guards, as they smoked their chillums on the roofs of the neighbouring buildings, we learned that the British force had not left the country, and there was a very decided opinion in the Afghan camp that they would not until the disasters of the previous year had been retrieved. June, however, passed away, and yet no signs of deliverance. July came and went. The crops which should have fattened the animals of a British army were cut and stored in the granaries of the Afghans, and yet no appearance of the British, though we daily heard news, more or less reliable, concerning the negotiations in progress between Eldred Pottinger and Akbar Khan. Early in August we learned that Shumsoodeen was about to set out for Candahar, and that he was to be accompanied by an army of 20,000 men, composed of Ghilzais, Andars, Tarins, Zadurranis, Waziris, and other Afghan tribes. We used to watch his troops exercising below, and the movements of his 3-horse artillery guns was especially fine. More than once we received orders to prepare for an immediate start for Cabul; but these were always countermanded, and though we felt our lives were to be spared, the delay in our release was inexplicable and heart-breaking. We were without reliable news from the outside world, and were quite unable to communicate either with Candahar or our fellow-captives in Cabul. Early in August Shumsoodeen really marched off with the intention, so it was said, of opposing Nott's advance; and now our guards began to look scowlingly at us, and to vow that the approach of the British army would be the signal for our death. At last the hour of our deliverance was at hand. At midnight, on August 19, I was awakened by the colonel, who said we were to start at once. Hastily rousing myself, I mechanically folded up my small bundle, which contained but one resai and a change of clothes, and accompanied our small party to the Cabul gateway. Here we saw five camels waiting for us. We were placed in khajawahs, two on each camel, and, strongly guarded by an escort of foot and horse, we wound our way slowly along the Cabul road. Our feelings of thankfulness at breathing the fresh night air, at seeing the citadel which had been our prison-house for so many months looming in the distance, gradually growing fainter and more indistinct until it faded away, were somewhat qualified by the ferocious aspect of our guards; they, however, treated us with civility, and provided us with wholesome food in sufficient quantities. On the 20th we halted during the heat of the day at Haft Asya; on the 21st at a small Ghilzai fort; on the 22nd at Killa Quazi; and on August 23 entered the city of Cabul. Now our guards, in order to earn the congratulations of the people of the city, began firing their weapons, brandishing their swords, and raising indeed a devilish noise. This had the effect of attracting attention to us, which we would gladly have avoided. There was, however, no help for it, and we were led through all the streets of the city exposed to the gaze and execrations of the multitude, until, having satiated their curiosity, the

Digitized by Google

people shouted for us to be taken to the Wuzeer. We were accordingly taken charge of by one of Mahomed Akbar's personal attendants, bidden to dismount, and escorted through some narrow streets into a courtyard, and then on to the roof of a house, where we found a carpet spread and a bevy of Afghans seated on it. After a short rest the Wuzeer came in and spoke most civilly to us, and immediately asked if we would not like to see our fellow-countrymen; a messenger was at once sent, and in a few moments Eldred Pottinger was ushered into our presence. The warmth of our greeting can be imagined; little had we ever dreamt we should meet again, and the mere fact of the Ghuznee and Cabul captives being permitted to join forces was in itself proof positive that we should soon meet with a happy release. I must say that Mahomed Akbar treated us most civilly; he gave us an excellent dinner, inquired as to our treatment at Ghuznee, expressed great anger at Shumsoodeen's conduct towards us, more especially the cowardly torture of the colonel, and compared it with his conduct to the captives, who apparently were treated well.

After dinner we were conducted to a separate sleeping apartment, and on the following morning, being provided with ponies, were escorted some miles to Shewukku, where we met all the captives, Englishmen and Englishwomen. The Cabul prisoners were overjoyed to find we were alive and well. We were free from the intolerable *ennui* and unbearable suspense which characterised our imprisonment at Ghuznee; and though the hunger for home news, for home sympathies, was strong within us, in comparing the present with the past we had great cause for contentment. The news of the rapid advance of the British force from Candahar was again bruited about, and received additional confirmation from the fact that on the night of the 26th, leaving two sick ladies, Mrs. Anderson and Trevor, and their families behind in charge of Anderson, Bygrave, Troup, and Dr. Campbell, we were hurried on to horses and camels, and moved off to Killa Quazi, where we halted the following day. On the night of the 28th we slept at Kot Ashroh, on the 29th at Tohkhana, and the next day, crossing the Oonai Pass, halted at Gurdan Dewar, on the banks of the Helmund, up which stream we pursued our weary journey. We now ascended the Hajeejak Pass, on the summit of which we had a marvellous view of the Koh-i-babu range. On September 2 we reached Killa-Topchi-Bashee, but after one day's halt descended into the Banian Valley, and were located in a small mud fort which had been occupied by some of the force which had wintered in the valley in the preceding year. Throughout this trying march our countrywomen had been exposed to hardships and privations of no ordinary kind. Privacy they had none, and when it is recollected that some had infants yet at the breast, it can readily be imagined what our feelings were towards our captors, who thus mocked and derided their womanhood. Even in this fort their miseries were intense. The filth with which they were surrounded is simply inde-

Digitized by Google

scribable. The vermin swarmed in countless masses over walls and floors, and yet our countrywomen showed a heroism, a patient endurance of their sufferings which was touching in the extreme. Day followed day, and yet no authentic news reached us from home; vague rumours of battles fought, of victories won, yet no sign of release, no hope of home. Some of our party, to while away the time, visited the famous idols in the vicinity of the fort, and made sketches of the two monsters. We could learn little about them, but they were said to belong to the Sassanian dynasty, which would make them only about 1,000 years old. But our information was not reliable; and though Eyre and Lady Sale made very pleasing sketches of them, I doubt if any of our party fully learned what they were, or how they came there. And now rumours began to take a definite shape. Now we learn of the capture of Ali Mesjed and the forcing of the Khyber; now that Pollock's avenging army is at Jellalabad, and that the colours of the 9th Foot fly by the side of the 13th over the fortress Sale has held so well; and now we hear that Pollock and Nott are on the march to Cabul. One desperate effort is to be made for life. If our keeper Shah Mahomed is faithful to his master, we shall be carried to Balkh and Bokhara, and our doom sealed. Will gold buy his fidelity? What Afghan can restrain his cupidity? Pottinger, Lawrence, and Johnson sound the man, and win him. But now arose the difficulty on our side. Our senior officers, Shelton and Palmer, declined to enter into the contract which Pottinger had agreed on, and we were in imminent danger of once more being hurried off to the northward. Fortunately, Pottinger and Lawrence prevailed, and Shah Mahomed, throwing off allegiance to Akbar, was guaranteed a large sum collectively by us, a safe asylum in India, and a monthly salary by Pottinger. On September 15, the chiefs between Bameean and Sir-i-Chusma having been bribed by us, we left our fort and commenced retracing our steps to Cabul, where we now learned Pollock was encamped. On the 17th we reached Killa-Topchi Bashee, and here we received a letter from Sir Richmond Shakspeare announcing the battle of Tazeen, and the still more welcome fact that he, at the head of 500 Kizzilbashis, was on the point of starting to effect our release. We at the same time heard that Sultan Jan was pursuing us, with a view to our recapture; so we determined to push hastily southward, following the road by which we had reached Bameean. Once more we crossed the Hajeejak Pass, once more we halted at Tohkhana, and the following day, on nearing Kot Ashroh, we espied the neat trim camp of Sale's brigade. It is needless to dwell on the welcome we received; it is needless to repeat the congratulations poured in on us on every side, or to dwell on the music of the cheer of the British soldiers, as, travel-worn and weary, yet joyous from the knowledge that we were free, we entered the British emcampment. Safe behind the sentries of the 13th Light Infantry, backed by a squadron of the 3rd Light Dragoons, we felt we could defy any foes Akbar could

Digitized by Google

bring against us. Having accomplished his mission, Sale escorted us back to Cabul, through the deserted streets of which we marched in triumph. It was just one short month since we Ghuznee prisoners were paraded up and down its densely thronged bazaars, exposed to the taunts and execrations of the Afghan multitude. My diary is closed: the Ghuznee captives are free. Nothing more remains to be told of the first Afghan war which has not already appeared in Kaye. This does not profess to be a history even of a portion of the campaign. It is merely a subaltern's diary of scenes that as yet, it is believed, have never been published to the people of England; of dangers and difficulties yet unacknowledged; of disasters, the offspring of incompetence, bravely yet unavailingly struggled against.

Digitized by Google

London Walks.

THERE is no solitude, so great philosophers have told us, like the solitude of a great city; nor, I would venture to add, is nature anywhere more impressive than in the midst of streets. The doctrine can only seem paradoxical to those who are not yet aware that the light which really gives a glory to cloud and mountain comes rather from the eye than from the sun. The dull man goes conscientiously plodding after the beautiful, expecting, it would seem, to find it lying about somewhere in lumps like guano or flint-implements. Some accepted teacher has discovered it in great abundance in the Alps or the Scotch Highlands. Thither the exultant tourist proceeds; and, with that gentle dulness which has something pathetic in its very simplicity, counts up the number of counties and square miles visible from a hill-top, and the cubic yards of granite which the mass contains, and assumes that the beauty is mathematically proportioned. Were beauty measurable by avoirdupois weight, the theory might be plausible. I take it, however, that beauty is not so much a material substance as a melody. It is the music given out by the well-tuned nature, which is at once the harp, the hearer, and the player. Rightly ordered, the instrument is responsive to many impulses; and the biggest of objects may be less efficient in evoking its notes than a touch given at the right instant by the veriest trifle. A single gleam of sunshine, a rift in a cloud, a half-audible whisper of a breeze may set the mind at work more keenly than the largest pyrotechnical display of storm and thunder and lightning. A lucifer match may be as effective as a sky-rocket in exploding a powder magazine. A glimpse of the moon between chimney-pots—nay, the straggling rays of a gas-lamp in a London fog may be sometimes more stimulating than the crash of a volcanic eruption or leagues of ocean steeped in the hues of sunset. Is it not notorious that poets succeed almost inversely to the magnitude of their topics? Your laureate, who deals in battles of Waterloo and coronations of monarchs, inevitably writes rubbish: the sight of "the meanest flower that blows," or, for that matter, of a beggar's rags, may prompt to an immortal verse which will outlive epics or the most legitimate tragedies.

The bare fact, then, that horizons are limited, and the great forces of nature manifested on a small scale, says nothing against their impressiveness. All depends on the state of mind; and I will not argue by any elaborate show of statistics that the imagination is most richly nourished and keenly stimulated where mind meets mind, and every object is directly imbued with human feeling. All great poets have been townsmen—I will not pause at the exceptions. They may go to the fields, as they may

Digitized by Google

go to their studies, to write down their poems out of hearing of organ-grinders. But the poetry is made amongst their fellows; and too long a stay either in the study or the country has a marvellous power of generating rust. Shakspeare, had he stayed at Stratford-on-Avon, would have become a twaddler. The Shallows and Slenders would have been too many for him in the long run. And why should we be too nice to learn in the same school? So far as we are poets—and every man should have one little spring of poetry in him, well locked up, as a general rule, and most carefully guarded from pen and ink—why should we not learn to appreciate our advantages and frankly proclaim that nature is only to be understood by your cockney? The true home-bred clown has as little feeling for his native fields as the genuine Swiss for his mountains. The romance is imported into them by the city rambler. That love of country life, on which we are apt to pride ourselves, is either an affectation or a relic of barbarism. So far as it is genuine, it means that we are not yet acclimatised to a civilised life. The old savage is still lurking within us. We actually admire, or profess to admire, a man so devoid of all intellectual interests that he can find a lasting pleasure in field sports. Considering that the end of ordinary education seems to be chiefly to generate disgust with literature and indifference to art, I can pardon a man who, when fully grown and presumably a reasoning creature, can enjoy even fox-hunting as a relaxation. But when an excusable indulgence becomes one chief employment of many human lives, I begin to ask wherein we are superior to the Ojibbeways. When we are superficially civilised, we shall put such sports in their proper places. A certain amount of gymnastics will long be required to find play for the superfluous mass of limb and stomach which is our encumbering inheritance from the old days, when hunting was essential to life. But at least we shall admit that a man is a superior type to a Centaur, and that the brain is the noblest part of the organism. But I am possibly wandering; and some people may even think me profane in regard to a main object of British worship.

My present purpose is not to wander into a general comparison between the advantages of London and the country, but to maintain the narrow thesis that there is quite enough country in London for any useful purpose, and that the mind is thus better prepared for submitting to its influence. It is my fate to be constantly measuring lengths of London pavement with the compasses bestowed by nature. Enough of the savage remains in me to make such peregrinations essential to the healthy condition of my gastric juices. And though I have no rooted aversion to the country, I am induced to believe that the future poets may sing the praises of E.C. as warmly as their predecessors celebrated Arcadia or the wilds of Cumberland. To some of the charms of a London stroll I am comparatively blind. I enjoy, as Dickens used to enjoy, a ramble through the streets at night; but, alas! I never had the luck to encounter a Sam Weller or Dick Swiveller. My fellow-creatures

Digitized by Google

are to my eyes provokingly uniform, and apt to present themselves merely in the light of mechanical contrivances for the supply of various material wants. Though it may be philosophically inaccurate, the race at large is to me a vast collection of automata, which may, it is true, be animated by souls, but, for my purposes, would be equally interesting if worked by springs. And, further, I am a professed misoscopist—if I may borrow a word from a great living humourist—an unequivocal and irreconcilable hater of picture-galleries, churches (considered from the guide-book point of view), great exhibitions, and other legitimate objects of an intelligent curiosity. It is a never-failing source of wonder to me to observe the occasional congestions of the circulating fluid of our streets when royalty is expected to pass in an hour or two, or some unlucky cab-horse has broken his knees. When such phenomena present themselves, I pass by on the other side, happy to think that in this vast city there is never a want of good Samaritans ready to sit on the animal's head, or a demand upon me to swell the applause which comes unfailingly from the multitudes thrilled by a passing vision of a prince's back-hair and his footmen's gorgeous calves. I love, I have said, the nature which is visible from our streets, and humanity as a part of nature. I consider houses as I might consider a coral reef or an ants' heap. Pall Mall or Oxford Street is for me a large calcareous deposit, destined to form part of the geological formations of the future; a growth, not an artistic product; a deluge of brick and mortar gradually engulfing a certain number of green fields, spreading, decaying, and crystallising in various forms in virtue of hidden forces, which I do not care to contemplate in their specific shapes of pecuniary speculation or domestic wants. It is the material secretion of a social organism, which I contemplate as I contemplate the shell of an oyster without trying to enter too closely into the animal's feelings.

My own little thread of conscious feeling is of little importance to others, but to myself it has, I confess, a very considerable interest; and I look upon this huge dingy metropolis, with its acres of brick and vast disgorgement of smoke, simply as the background to my own thoughts. To the world at large I am a minute insect, one product of the multitudinous processes of which the life of this gigantic mass of humanity is composed. But, in my own mind, I take the liberty to invert the relation. I am for myself the centre of the universe; and this huge phenomenon, and the hurly-burly of struggling life which it includes, is only a vast magic-lantern screen on which I may project my own fancies, or, like the music of the spheres, a continuous under-current of melody which perhaps unconsciously determines my thoughts, but is not habitually realised as a distinct and separate phenomenon. It is as the element in which I move, and not generally an object of distinct thought more than the air or sunlight of an average day. Yet when I reflect, I become aware that its varying pulses set up corresponding trains of meditation, and I can at moments grasp some special mood and see how

Digitized by Google

it has been stimulated, like the fantastic images of a dream, by a dim perception of the external changes. I dream that I am swept away in a deluge, and find on waking that the fancy was suggested by the drip of water from a towel; and so, in passing along London streets, many trains of thought flash across the mental horizon, and it is possible to discover that they are all indirectly due to the varying scenery of the monstrous town, and glimpses of the endless tragi-comedy that is always weaving and unweaving its complex plot within its borders. To gather together these indirect and shadowy influences, to distinguish their characteristics from those of a country road, a moon, or a mountain, would be, from their nature, impossible. They are too vague and shadowy, too subtly intermixed, and too dependent upon the idiosyncrasy of the recipient mind. If the task could be performed, we might extract a theory of the true æsthetic power of London. I renounce the attempt altogether, but some fragmentary suggestions may serve my purpose.

I love, for example, a stroll through the more unfinished and amorphous parts of this gigantic wilderness. No forest glade, with its suggestion of interminable intricacy of foliage and remote asylums for wild and timorous creatures, no storm-beaten bit of sea coast, backed by caverns hollowed by ages of gnawing breakers, and fronted by the innumerable ranks of waves advancing to the assault, is more impressive to me than certain desolate nooks on the edge of the London chaos. Here is an equivocal thoroughfare; something which was a country lane and which will be a back street. Part of its length is bordered by a neglected field; a few trees, which it is not worth while to cut down, struggle with scanty foliage, and even put out some sooty flowers in spring-time. There are queer little modern "kitchen-middens," and accumulations of broken pottery and mysterious refuse of things in general; the cat wails there at night; and half-washed children play games which have a tendency to the projection of unaccountable missiles towards the wayfarer. On the opposite side is a gaping hole, behind a ragged fence, presumably meant for the foundation of a house, but still frequented by a dissipated family of obviously unprincipled poultry. Further on is a forlorn row of houses still in the "shell" stage of development, blank, hideous, bleak, still waiting for its mouldy covering of stucco; protected at night by a stray watchman, though even in the daytime approach to it involves a hopeless struggle through abysses of tenacious mud. Beyond is a row of the genuine London formation, more hideous to the æsthetic mind than the most squalid of turf-covered cottages. And in the midst are a few straggling houses which have seen the old days when the genuine village was not yet engulfed, looking like a country bumpkin come up to a cattle show; they have still porches with fragmentary creepers, and rags and tatters of their old gardens cling to their skirts. The most rustic and belated edifice announces itself as an almshouse, founded by some benevolent tradesman who had retreated to this solitude from London, and wanted, we suppose,

Digitized by Google

to atone for his sharp practices by posthumous benevolence to his neighbours. In those days people indulged in neighbours—and sharp practices.

I love the place so well that I have persuaded myself that the road through it is a short cut to a frequent goal of my daily walks. Why do I love it? Am I the victim of an abnormal and unhealthy appetite; or do other reasonable beings share my propensity? There are no artists sketching a scene surely more manageable than the cliffs of the Wetterhorn, and not even a stray photographer condescends to take its portrait. Novelists, it is true, must have been here or hereabouts, for it is precisely the region where the comic villain, of the dog-fancying variety, concocts a plot with the diabolical aristocrat, or perhaps reveals it to the pawky detective. Virtue out at elbows sometimes retires to similar regions, though in fiction it more often resides in country villages. Such recognition is hardly complimentary; and, indeed, the separate elements of the scene are slightly unsavoury. It is like the neutral zone between land and sea, where a tangle of dead seaweed is haunted by scavenger crabs prowling after the miscellaneous waifs and strays of the ocean. Yet there, though fragmentary dogfish have an evil odour, the imagination is carried to unknown abysses of the great waters, or to far distant tropical or Arctic shores; and there, too, the visible action of the monstrous plane that is eternally levelling the surface of the planet may transport us to dim geological epochs. Some similar impression arises here, I fancy, on this ambiguous region, which is, in fact, the beach trampled into temporary barrenness by the advancing surge of social life. Like the last field on the mountain side, or the remotest clearing in a forest-girt settlement, or the border village between two great empires, it favours the specific sentiment which in nature is symbolised by twilight. As Scott prescribes the moon for a visit to Melrose, this rough selvage of civilisation should be seen when the light on the street-barricade is struggling with the last glimmer of a London sun; when broad mysterious shadows suggest lurking garrotters to the timorous wayfarer, and the weary mason is plodding his homeward way from the half-finished tenement. Then Jaques might find as good a scene for melancholy musing as in the glades of Arden, and in the vague light a shell does quite as well as a ruined abbey. Ghosts of the old rustic lovers who met in the country lane flit uneasily past, soon to be exorcised by the tumult whose muffled roar rises unceasingly in the distance. Possibly our own ghost rises, the ghost, say, of the petticoated boy who used to wander hereabout in genuine fields, and people them with hypothetical wolves, some forty centuries—or was it only forty years?—ago. There is a dark grove of yew trees in Kensington Gardens which he summarily identified with the wood where, according to Mrs. Markham, the Druids performed human sacrifices. And these now ambiguous, then still rural districts, were obviously the scene of Christian's first day's journey from the city of Destruction—represented by Knightsbridge—

Digitized by Google

and of all such stories as required beanstalks, forests, and wild beasts of more or less abnormal varieties. And now from haunted field and lane the parting genius is with sighing sent. You can hear his moans mingling with the city hum, and listen to the mystic cry "Great Pan is dead," for the old half-savage country god, with his goat-legs and cloven feet, vanishes before the advance of the main drainage system.

In the genuine country Pan has not been slain, though his favourite haunts have been transformed; he has only been put into livery—gaiters and a velveteen jacket—and has become, one supposes, the gamekeeper of the local squire, and, alas! is a dreary object, like every other degenerate type. I long for the day—speaking of course upon purely æsthetic grounds—when the forebodings of so-called croakers have been realised; when English fields will have gone out of cultivation, and all our food be imported in tins from the far West; or when the legitimate alternative has been properly carried out, when our fields will have become simple factories, ploughed and reaped by self-acting machinery under the direction of a comfortable human being sitting like a reasonable man by his fireside in London, and occasionally pressing the lever of an electric telegraph. All hybrid types are discordant; and English scenery is a compromise, with bits of the old savagery preserved in parks like stuffed birds in glass cases, and unfortunate London houses strayed from their fellows to shiver dismally far from their native gas, amidst the sloppy chilly lanes where the fiends of rheumatism and ague flounder through the dreary twilight. London is good for men, and the wilderness for beasts, human or otherwise; but of all abodes of the goddess of Dulness there is surely none where her worship reigns more exclusively than in the mansions transplanted from Belgravia to call themselves country-houses. The poor victims are, I suppose, kept alive by spelling through the newspaper, as the man in a diving-bell sucks in his scanty supplies of pumped air. Squire Western was a coarse, ignorant, brutal, jovial old churl, but thoroughly in his place; now that he has been oiled and curled, can talk about art, and has to force his great fists through the sleeves of an evening coat, he is little better than a Pendennis out of Pall-Mall—which is a contradiction in terms. The organism—forgive the bits of scientific jargon which now shove themselves even into the uncongenial regions of nonsense!—is not in harmony with the environment.

Perhaps my eye is jaundiced; I suffer from a disease, nameless though unfortunately prevalent, due to insufficient nutrition of the pocket, to an absence of a "stake in the country," and producing as one of its symptoms an inadequate appreciation of some British idols. To my mind, at any rate, the country means tramps along a high road, aching knees and bespattered trousers, malevolent milestones proclaiming unpalatable truths, warnings to trespassers at every attractive bypath, clusters of semi-detached villas apparently brought down from town and unkindly abandoned in the fields by wearied carriers, and at every point which might otherwise have been picturesque an eligible family man-

Digitized by Google

sion, a kind of impregnable outpost fortified by the deadliest respectability to check any possible insurrection of the spirit of Nature. That spirit is too thoroughly fettered to endanger its oppressors. When, as I am borne homewards by railway, I see the cruel crawling mist steaming up from dank pastures in the gloom of a country twilight, it looks to me like a vast wet blanket drawn over the landscape, quenching all comfortable life; and I hail with transport the gas-lamps gleaming through the friendly London fog.

The London fog has, I am aware, been misjudged by foreigners, like other English institutions. To me it is as a poetic halo, investing the mighty city with a peculiar charm. I speak not here of the simple utilitarian sense of comfort to which it sometimes ministers. When I sit down with lighted candles and cheerful firelight on a yellow London morning, I bless the useful fog—as the "conscious swains" blessed the Homeric moonshine—wrap myself in the sense of charmed isolation, and sympathise with the eel who buries himself in the mysterious darkness of mud and water at the bottom of some sullen stream. But here I would only dwell upon the more distinctly æsthetic charm of our peculiar atmosphere. Some people talk as though pitiless sunshine and cloudless skies were an essential condition of landscape beauty. They have not yet discovered that the whole poetry of a landscape depends upon its atmospheric drapery. The dead earth is informed with life by the varying lights and shades; all that is dramatic and vital in scenery, all that the poet sees and that is not seen by the land-surveyor, depends upon the shifting effects of vapour and cloud. The very definition of life includes change; and without the ceaseless interchange of gloom and brilliancy, with the infinite gradations of luminous intershades, the world would be as dead as the moon, and the landscape might be fitly represented by a coloured diagram. Sentiment begins with mist. All description of scenery is utterly valueless which does not enable you to identify the tone conferred by the time and weather, as well as the tangible and measurable objects in the view. As well describe a face by a catalogue of features—*item*, a pair of grey eyes and so forth—and omit all reference to the one interesting characteristic, its expression. The dreariest of landscapes, according to vulgar estimate—the flattest stretch of monotonous plain—becomes admirable when storms are abroad and vast shadows of thunder-clouds or trailing fringes of rain are sweeping across the horizon; and the noblest range of mountain peaks grows tiresome, stale, and depressing in the steady light of a commonplace summer day.

And, to come back to our London fogs, where can you find a more magnificent variety of expression than is communicated to our homely streets by their shifting curtain of sullen vapour? I have seen fine sunsets here and there, from mountain summits whence the eye ranges over vast breadths of shadowy plain edged by gleaming saw-teeth of eternal snow, from the deck of a ship in mid-Atlantic where the mingled hues of stupendous cloudbanks were blended in scattered and inter-

Digitized by Google

lacing reflections upon the huge backs of the broad ocean-rollers, or from the banks of the mighty Mississippi emerging from the trackless northern forests on its way to the distant tropical seas, where the gorgeous pinnacles of clouds seemed to be brooding over illimitable ranges of yet unbroken prairie, the seat of the empires yet unborn. Such sights are amongst the sublimest to be seen on earth, and engrave themselves at once and for ever upon the memory. And yet I am not sure that the finest of all these dramatic displays, in which Nature seems to be sounding her loudest trumpet-tones, may not be seen from Battersea Suspension Bridge. The population of Cheyne Walk does not seem, as a rule, to be profoundly conscious of its privileges; but possibly it would prefer a good police-report to the most finely-wrought tragedy of Shakspeare or Æschylus. Its judgment is hardly final; and some of our painters have shown that they are more susceptible to the simple charm of that most impressive bit of scenery. They, however, and I do not blame them, seem to be chiefly occupied by the more sensuous charm of delicate gradations of colour. They scarcely show, what it is perhaps impossible to put upon canvas, the more impalpable sentiment which animates the scene considered as a whole; when the vague masses of ugly or picturesque or simply insipid building are regarded as an integral part of this monstrous metropolis, with its inconceivable accumulations of happiness and misery, of crime and heroism, and the dim shadows and gorgeous gleams and melancholy spaces of gloom, the softened light on sky and river seem to be an appropriate exhalation from the human passions which they enshroud. Nothing is what it is except in its relation to its surroundings; and as the roar of a great city—trifling enough in itself—has an effect upon the mind quite different from the murmurs of a stream or a forest, so the sentiment due to a vague consciousness of the immediate contiguity of the vast tragi-comedy of London life blends mysteriously with the cloudy phantasmagoria of a sunset on the Thames. Some such obscure sentiment has been inspired still more pointedly when I observed the same commonplace phenomenon from the familiar standpoint of Hyde Park. Often I have felt how the clouds that gather round the sun setting behind the trees of Kensington, take a strange colouring from the seething mass of Cockney humanity beneath. The glowing west is balanced by the lurid vapour rising heavily over the eastern city, and tinged below by the diffused glare from its countless fires. The Serpentine ruffled by a wintry breeze is grander in the dusk than Rydal or Loch Katrine, however besung by the poetic prophets of Nature. Its bed has been hollowed by men instead of glaciers, but it has reflected during its brief existence an infinitely greater variety of human passion. Perhaps some associations, half buried below the stratum of conscious thought, cause the peculiar thrill, the recognition as of some invisible majestic presence, which always comes to me when I look down the length of our toy ocean and see in the distance the towers of Westminster Abbey painted in the softest grey upon the distant curtain of

Digitized by Google

rising mist. I try to summon up distinct images, but they fade when one would bring them into the definite field of vision. The old palace may possibly suggest indefinite memories of Queen Anne and breathless periwigged statesmen hurrying to and fro between Kensington and St. James's, under the impression that an old woman's death would lead to a general inversion of the order of the universe; or one may look across the park towards Tyburn and recall the hideous processions marching from Newgate to form an audience for the last dying speech of some rowdy Captain Macheath, now swallowed up in oblivion, along with the chaplain who tried to extract a pious sentiment from his lips, and the drunken mob who hooted him for not dying game; or possibly one may turn towards Paddington and identify it with the country village to which Miss Byron was dragged across secluded fields to be rescued by the heroic Grandison; or, again, towards the barracks to which Rawdon Crawley repaired one dismal Sunday morning and found his friend Captain McMurdo reading *Bell's Life* in bed; and thence one may wander in thought to duels fought in old times in this secluded region in the dark, when spirited gentlemen had swords ready and had only to call a chair after supper and adjourn to the nearest open space; or one may think more vaguely of the generations of dandies whose horses' feet have trampled Rotten Row, and who have vanished one by one, leaving some impalpable ghostlike memories to haunt the scene of their glories. But we only need the brief mention of some such conceivable impressions, which here and there rise to the surface or glimmer for a second below the surface of thought to show once more how hopeless would be the attempt to catalogue and define the complex elements of the total impression made by a view in London under characteristic circumstances. It seems rather as though a multitudinous army of shadowy phantoms were hurrying across the field of view so rapidly and confusedly that if one stands out for a second he has melted into the crowd before we can define his features. London naturally swarms with phantoms, and each, we may suppose, has his appropriate hours and conditions of visibility; as our minds are attuned to different moods by the shifting colours and forms, lights and shadows of the scenery, we are more or less sensitive to spiritual presences of different orders.

Some persons, indeed, of vivid imagination, give a special guardian to each region. They are susceptible—as I confess that I never can be—to local associations. Macaulay, as his biographer tells us, delighted in rambles through London, weaving stories in which previous inhabitants of each particular district appeared in their former haunts. He repeopled Westminster Hall with the lawyers and statesmen who have worn its pavement in old days, heard the shouts which greeted the acquittal of the seven bishops, or sat by Miss Burney as she gossiped with Wyndham whilst Burke was denouncing Warren Hastings. I detest history, and I can never get up definite associations. My mind is so unhappily constituted that I seldom know within two or three centuries at what period

Digitized by Google

any particular celebrity "flourished." My associations, therefore, are a vague hotch-pot, a heterogeneous sediment deposited by a number of facts which have temporarily lodged in my brain and then melted provokingly into a formless aggregate. And, therefore perhaps, I can never get a distinct historical fact to connect itself very definitely with a specific material object. My piety does not get a bit warmer amidst the ruins of Iona, nor does my patriotism glow with any additional fervour on the plain of Marathon. It is not, I hope, from philosophy, frigid or otherwise, but from sheer muddleheadedness—an excessive fluidity of brain. Historical information washes hither and thither in that unlucky receptacle, and gets painfully mixed. I have walked more times than I can count before the banqueting-house at Whitehall, and tried to associate it with the death of Charles I. A morbid sense of duty has led me to make the experiment in order to prove to myself that I am not altogether devoid of a faculty which seems to give so much pleasure to its possessors. It won't do. I can meditate with pleasure at other times upon that incident, for in seasons of mooning I am an uncompromising regicide. It is not, I think, from any particular political theories, but that my non-historical mind refuses altogether to contemplate the political, or indeed the moral, aspect of the question. I am neither Roundhead nor Cavalier for the moment, simply an æsthetic spectator; and I can admire fanaticism as I admire any great display of natural forces, simply as a magnificent dramatic display of indomitable force of character, breaking up all accepted formulæ and crushing through the foundations of social order. I no more ask the question of right and wrong than I ask it about an earthquake or a thunderstorm. Now this attitude becomes untenable so soon as one fixes an event to definite relations of place and time. I prefer to keep grand historical incidents in the world of the imagination, where they can be moulded and transfigured into ideal proportions at pleasure. It vulgarises a great catastrophe to regard it as having actually happened at a fixed date in this commonplace world—close by Scotland Yard and the Lost Property Office, and opposite the porch from which those admirable lifeguardsmen fascinate the passing street-boy. You are forced to listen to the impertinences of the historical critic, and to ask the irrelevant question, What did happen? not the true question, What ought to have happened? It is always a wonder to me how any faith can survive a pilgrimage to a sacred place. The contrast between the obtrusive present and the shadowy past must be so vivid as to suggest a flat contradiction. In childish days it is otherwise, for the line between dreamland and reality is not so decisively drawn. But, for my part, I have decided never to go to Stratford-on-Avon, lest I should cease to believe in the existence of Shakspeare. The old Stratford, as it still exists in my imagination, would be turned out of the world by its modern substitute. No room would be left for it in the geography of the fancy; and I should reconcile the two conceptions not by seeing the present transfigured, but by assuming that the historic relics were a hopeless sham, and should

Digitized by Google

become a convert to that excellent American lady who proved Shakspeare to be an impostor.

It is only, then, by the vague sentiment which adheres to a place like an impalpable aroma, not by the suggestion of particular scenes, that I can enjoy the charm of association. If ever I regret this mortal defect—for I fully admit that it is a defect—it is when I think of Johnson in his beloved Strand. I would give something to see him shouldering his way from Temple Bar with Goldsmith, or to hear him lecturing Boswell upon the beauties of Charing Cross. There, said the sage, was the full tide of human existence. Johnson has been abused and praised on many grounds; but his great claim to be a genuine prophet of the true mode of enjoying nature has never been properly set forth, and has, indeed, been received with unthinking ridicule. That most exquisite artist, Hawthorne, who loved Johnson in his own way, speaks of him with benevolent contempt, as one who only meddled with the surface of life. Yet I fancy that there was more human nature in Johnson's little finger than in Hawthorne's whole body. His diet was gross, says Hawthorne, and truly his food, spiritual or bodily, was not calculated for a dweller in the New England fairy-land. But it was uncommonly substantial, and his love of London was woven out of lasting materials. He had drunk deep of the bitter cup of poverty in a great city, and knew that sorrows and passionate regrets and triumphs and joys were hidden under the canopy of smoke which has ever since been brooding over the region which he loved. To him London, as symbolised by the roaring tide at Charing Cross, meant the hard struggle of miserable outcasts clinging desperately to the skirts of civilised society. But it meant also patience, "sovran o'er transmuted ill," and slowly winning its way, step by step, from the edge of despair to a sad serenity; tender love cheering lonely struggles in miserable garrets; humble skill, despised by "lettered arrogance," walking its narrow round day by day, soothing pain, and earning a reward in the consciousness of a single talent well employed; genius slowly emerging from obscurity by the help of friendly hands, and a vast chaotic chorus of mingled memories, melancholy at the best, but yet so harmonised as to yield a dominant tone of courageous endeavour. He believed, in cold blood, that men were, on the whole, unhappy; but yet the sight of a huge collection of human beings, by the mere suggestion of strenuous work and multitudinous impulses, gave an invigorating impulse to the energetic side of his nature. The clash and roar of the throng may recall to the pessimist the struggles of a huge dumb creature writhing in the vain effort to escape from torture; and yet even to him there might be something animating in the mere fulness of life, the abounding and exulting power of the human torrent. If a poet may be excused for retiring to solitudes to listen to the still sad music of humanity, he has surely no right to look down upon the man who can hear the same notes in the thickest of the throng, where the blood is stirred by the magic influence of contact with

Digitized by Google

his fellows. Truly, if you will look close, there is much that is hardly poetical or animating in the constituent atoms of a London, or any other, crowd. Of all the obvious commonplaces, which strike one every now and then with fresh astonishment, there is one which most persistently seizes me upon such occasions, as though it were a new discovery. I look at some grimy figure, one of the misshapen, uncleanly products of an imperfect civilisation, a poor costermonger, or a strolling beggar, put together out of odds and ends, rags and gin and dirt. I recollect that he, too, must once have been born and nursed, and somehow or other dragged through the early stages of infancy; that he must, therefore, have been the object of a certain amount of maternal affection, possibly the centre of daydreams, and, at least, the recipient of enough care to keep body and soul together. Up to the time at which his unsavoury presence strikes your organs of sense, he has somehow picked up a sufficiency of food, fire, and clothing. Starting from this miserable unit, I remember that every one of the crowd before me has also had a history of his own; that he is for himself the centre of the world, and the result to which all the ages have worked; that his mind is stored with more or less romantic passages and memories of childhood, and a complex system of interests in business, pleasure, or affection—in short, a whole life of his own, of which only a fragment here and there is perceptible by his fellows. And, then, that all this intricate and apparently chaotic mass of crossing and twisting existences, as confused at first sight as the population of an anthill, is in sober reality a gigantic mechanism, discharging with extraordinary regularity the functions of acquiring, assimilating, and distributing the supplies needed for its innumerable wants. The whole scene becomes to my mind quite as impressive as the starry heavens, which are the standing type of sublimity. Perhaps it would take a Shakspeare at his best, rather than a blear-eyed Johnson, to utter the thoughts that arise confusedly in presence of such a spectacle, and to tinge it with the sense of its continuous melting into the dim abysses of the past. Certainly no English writer of whom I can think has done it justice. Herr Teufelsdroeck has made some not inadequate reflections, after his manner; but most of our novelists prefer to keep to the merely humorous, or to morality of the cheap and easy variety. Paris has perhaps received more justice from its children; though Balzac spices too highly, and Victor Hugo lapses too readily into the hyperbolic: each has given us an essence of Paris, and so has even its last describer, M. Zola, who unfortunately seems to have an eye for nothing but the disgusting. Perhaps London is too vast, has too little apparent unity, to make the task of exhibiting its true essence an easy one even for the most powerful imagination. We can see bits of it at a time, and have characteristic sketches of Pall Mall or Seven Dials; but the gigantic amorphous mass stuns the mind which tries to take it in as a whole. And yet one cannot but fancy that some poet or novelist of the future—the great man for whom we are just now waiting to con-

Digitized by Google

tinue the series of immortal Englishmen—may succeed in piercing to the heart of this monstrous concretion, and compressing into a few pages the pith and essence of the thoughts of which the ordinary wayfarer through its streets catches at intervals by the extreme skirts or fringes.

To me, who have not the slightest pretensions to be a poet or a seer, direct meditations upon human life, or this huge ganglion in the world's nervous system, very rarely suggest themselves. I have no inclination for sitting upon the ground at Charing Cross or elsewhere, and telling sad stories of the deaths of kings; and I generally leave direct moralising to my betters. In fact, whatever may be the case with the truly imaginative, few people can calmly sit down and enjoy a prospect, whether of fields, or houses, or mountains, or live for long upon the aërial sustenance afforded by contemplating the beautiful. We—speaking for the average of mankind—require some figures in the foreground, whether substantial or derived from our own thoughts. There is a famous story, still administered, I believe, to the infantile mind, about "Eyes and No-eyes." Eyes during a country walk finds (if I remember rightly) a water-rat, and a Roman camp, and a fossil, and other objects, calculated to enlarge the human mind upon intelligent reflection. Poor No-eyes, of course, sees nothing at all but a straight road with dinner at the end of it. As usual, one rather sympathises with the bad boy in the little apologue. He may, it is true, have been thinking of nothing, like the rustic enduring a sermon. But he may also have been in dreamland, humming over the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, or puzzling his little brain with some fragment of infantile metaphysics. Indifference to water-rats is not necessarily the sign of a corrupt heart, and may show the early development of philosophic or imaginative tendencies. The perceptive faculties should not oust all reflection from its proper place. I enjoy my dinner; but I prefer to make believe that it is an incidental accompaniment to pleasant talk. I try to take my food as it were by inadvertence and as giving time for my neighbour's effort at a happy repartee—to treat it as a superfluous, though sufficiently agreeable, adjunct to the main purpose of a social meeting. And so I take scenery to be, like the music at a state feast, a mere secondary accompaniment to the main purpose of the day. It, and the thoughts which it dimly suggests, should be indirectly preserved, whilst my chief energy is given to talks with a friend, or even to talks with the most sympathetic of all companions—myself.

In fact, I find that walking, and especially walking in London, is a most admirable promoter of thought. It has a kind of lubricating effect upon the rusty machinery of my mind. Some great philosophers can sit down, like Newton, and meditate for hours with one leg clothed and the other bare upon the edge of their beds. Perhaps, if I could do that, I could be a Newton also; but I can no more nail my mind down to a particular line of thought under such circumstances

Digitized by Google

than I can hold out a hundredweight at arm's length for two seconds together. My mind, if I may call it so, begins to flicker and tremble. It makes sudden dashes down irrelevant avenues; it catches hold of a thought by the wrong end, and drops it before it can discover its true name; it drops from serious reflection to consider the proceedings of a sparrow or the condition of a bookbinding. When "thinking," I feel like a drunken man with a lantern hunting for a lost sixpence; the light dances wildly round and round, and if, at some moment, a chance ray is reflected from the object of search, in the next moment it has flashed into a distant corner. The obvious remedy, and one doubtless efficacious for a Newton, is the remedy of solitude. But for feebler intellects there are imps who haunt the study as persistently as the market-place. The distractions come not from without, but within—from the innumerable irrelevant associations with which every idea surrounds itself, and which are always tempting one into devious tracks. The pure intellect is surrounded by a multitude of subsidiary faculties which seem to take a malicious delight in tripping it up. And therefore I find that the streets are my best study. There these worrying faculties, which torment one when not employed, have enough occupation to keep them quiet. My eyes are taken up in the monotonous duty of steering my course, and work automatically without openly appealing to my consciousness, instead of constantly asking questions like curious children upon every new object that happens to strike them; my ears are satisfied with the continuous hum, and do not give a sudden jerk to the brain whenever a coal falls from the fire; my legs and arms are not accumulating a vague restlessness which when unsatisfied tells upon the whole mental equilibrium. Undisturbed by these minor affluents, the main stream of thought can flow on with comparative tranquillity. I keep any difficult points that occur in my study or in business to browse upon in my daily peregrinations. At such times I have succeeded in keeping a single point in my field of view at least whilst I was crossing a street, or sometimes along the whole length of Pall Mall. My senses have enough to do, I suppose, in taking care of my body, and hitherto they have not brought me into contact with an omnibus; and, leaving that object to their attentions, my mind can work with comparative ease and clearness, and feels like one who has shaken off a troublesome companion who has interrupted him by impertinent questions.

This desirable end may be partly achieved in the country. Pounding along a highroad or across ploughed fields will certainly provide sufficient employment for one's lower self—for that feeding, breathing, and local apparatus which the soul is forced to carry about with it. But this, it must be added, is not enough. The soul cannot get rid entirely of its muddy vesture; and the energies of the body react in subtle and mysterious fashions upon the intellectual processes of its exalted companion. The barren monotony of a country walk is depressing to the meditative mind; the same tone of sentiment lasts for miles; one green

Digitized by Google

field is amazingly like another when you are plunged in a brown study; the same short simple melody seems to be running in your head for miles; you go on hammering at the same idea from the same point of view; you follow the same thread of thought and drop it at the same knot to begin the weary process over again; you feel that if the country parson occasionally preaches a dull sermon he has a full license, not only from the stolidity of his clodhopping congregation, but from the dreary uniformity of the trees and cows which have been the deaf audience to whom he probably addressed his rehearsal. For one does not always argue with oneself when alone, but also with the half-seen bystanders who are quite innocent of conscious participation. I have sometimes wondered at the insensibility of the sleepy fellow-passenger to whom I have silently addressed that brilliant invective against the writer of the leading article in my newspaper, and who does not appreciate the mingled wit and logic of the argument which, it is true, he has not heard. One's best sayings, it is a familiar remark, never occur to one at the right moment; and most of the best repartees that pass current as proofs of ready wit have no doubt been composed, as it were, in answer to a later echo of the original remark. Now I find that I am unusually fertile in such smart sayings when I am plodding through London streets. My mind, let us say, is occupied in a profound meditation upon the Eastern Question or the balance of trade. These are not, indeed, my favourite topics, but they may pass for purposes of illustration. My lower organism is meanwhile occupied with all the passing objects of London scenery; it is guarding me against omnibuses, finding its way past mud-heaps, plunging into some of those short cuts through queer labyrinths of back passages which reveal tokens of the mysterious life of the Troglodytes of civilisation, emerging into a crowded thoroughfare and noting the strange vagaries of modern builders which are making our streets an architectural museum, pausing perhaps at the bookstalls, which are a standing *memento mori* to ambitious authors, vaguely noting caricatures in a shop window, or taking in some strange effect of light and shade, or glancing down some sudden vista when crossing an open space or coming out upon the river, and dimly conscious of the various characteristics which give to one part of the mighty metropolis a legal, to another a commercial, and to a third a simply respectable or quite the reverse of a respectable odour.

Both sets of operations go on simultaneously; one half of the brain, perhaps, is working the limbs, whilst the other is devoting itself to the solution of the intellectual difficulty. But the two halves are not so separate but that one receives many suggestions from the other, or at times is affected by a sub-conscious process of action and reaction. The effect, so far as the higher faculty is concerned, is a curious stimulation—a marked increase in the rapidity, vivacity, and versatility of the trains of thought. The ideas seem to be suddenly shaken and change their positions like colours in a kaleidoscope; they are suddenly dashed into

Digitized by Google

new relations; some indefinable element is intruded from the senses which brings out unsuspected suggestions; the idea is no longer a simple thing, as it is in the country, but seems to have innumerable facets; each spot flashes into brilliancy by turns; instead of that painful recurrence of the same mode of approaching the same problem which vexes one in the country, as it sometimes becomes overpowering on a sleepless night, one's mind seems to be alert, capable of springing from one point of view to another, and, without conscious effort, of getting, according to the common phrase, new lights upon the subject. If I wished to convert the world to my opinions upon the Eastern Question—an end to which I fear that I am reprehensibly indifferent—I should think it an excellent preparative to take a walk from the West to the East of London. I should, without knowing it, assume the frame of mind appropriate to every section. I should feel, rather than guess, how my argument would look in the decorous regions of South Kensington, how it was affected by the imaginary presence of the gorgeous flunkeys who lounge round Belgravian doors, whether I was put out of countenance by the gentlemen in club windows, stimulated to flights of loud-tongued eloquence by the noisy inhabitants of Seven Dials or Covent Garden, made to feel foolish in the legal atmosphere, and disgracefully sentimental in the regions impregnated by commerce. In truth, there is nothing which makes one feel more keenly the absurdity of trying to convert anybody to anything than addressing yourself in imagination to ninety-nine out of the first hundred men you meet in a London street, and thinking what a vast gulf intervenes between their minds and your own, to be bridged only by an elaborate process of education bestowed upon one party or the other. Without arriving, however, at this chimerical result, the mere process of airing an idea in the many different worlds which may be discovered within half an hour's walk through London is really to submit it to a whole series of tests, which frequently lead to surprising modifications. Reasoning is not so completely as philosophers fancy an abstract process carried on like multiplication and division, so as always to bring out the same results, but a complex operation in which the physical condition, and still more the half-perceived relations of the reasoner, count for more than he knows. Somebody has said that a whole region was once converted from a gloomy to a cheerful form of religion by an effective system of drainage. In this case, no doubt, the influence was produced by something more tangible than mere change of scenery; but that, too, would count for something, and I have no doubt that, if statistics could be collected, it would appear that a man's philosophy was much affected by the circumstances of his habitually looking upon a brick wall or a crowded street.

The higher faculty repays some part of its debt to the lower. If some accident, as is probable enough, startles the dreamer out of his meditative mood, he comes back to realities with a mind full of vivid

Digitized by Google

and various trains of thought. Whatever significance there may be in the outward world has a better chance of finding him in a receptive state. The sights and sounds which have already been tacitly tuning his reflections suddenly spring into sharp impressiveness; he is sensitive to the tragic or sublime elements of the scenery. Many excellent cockneys, it is true, have gone through life without being aware that any such elements exist. A traveller, it is said, once walked through a hot summer day by the side of one of the great American lakes, and almost died of thirst because he had forgotten that the waters of the inland sea were fresh. So we, who daily tramp in and out of London, may hunger and thirst for beauty, and it never occurs to us, because all our popular teachers have told us the contrary, that we have only to open our eyes to see it. But when the thought has once occurred, it is surprising how often a sudden flash of grandeur will present itself. Even the insensible Wordsworth was impressed by the view from Westminster Bridge at sunrise, and many a cockney who has by some chance seen London at that unseasonable hour, or found himself in the City on Sunday, has discovered—simply because the unusual conditions roused his attention—that he has for years inhabited a city full of picturesque and impressive views. But if our vision is once unsealed, we may become sensitive to the grandeur of the monstrous town at any season. In its mystic robe of fog or in the delicately tempered sunlight, by the rushing river, gliding at its own savoury will, in the main throng of men, in its singular oases of solitude (haunted by nomad tribes of outcasts) on the outskirts, where it is seen slowly engulfing the country, in sight of the grand dome of St. Paul's or of the towers of Westminster, or that queer region near Clapham which seems to be an asylum for lunatic railway trains, there are always sudden glimpses to be caught of strange symbols into which we may read such meaning as we please. A man must be dull who cannot find in them the elements of terror and admiration. We may leave it to the writers of guidebooks to describe curiosities for the benefit of tourists; but the true Londoner should learn to regard his home as a vast book full of strange meanings, and often most impressive in its apparently dull passages.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"Mr. Smith was so kind as to bring me a cup of tea."

Digitized by Google

White Wings: A Yachting Romance.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Secret Schemes.

THE delight with which John of Skye heard that his friend Dr. Sutherland was coming back to the yacht, and that we were now setting out for Ballahulish or Corpach to meet him, found instant and practical expression on this fine, breezy, sunlit morning.

"Hector," says he, "we will put the gaff topsail on her!"

What did he care though this squally breeze came blowing down the Sound in awkward gusts?

"It is a fine wind, mem," says he to the Admiral, as we slowly leave the green waters and the pink rocks of Polterriv, and get into the open and breezy channel. "Oh, we will mek a good run the day. And I beg your pardon, mem, but it is a great pleasure to me that Mr. Sutherland himself is coming back to the yat."

"He understands your clever sailing, John: is that it?"

"He knows more about a yat as any chentleman I will ever see, mem. And we will try to get a good breeze for him this time, mem—and not to have the calm weather."

This is not likely to be a day of calm weather, at all events. Tide and wind together take us away swiftly from the little harbour behind the granite rocks. And is Iona over there all asleep; or are there some friends in the small village watching the *White Dove* bearing away to the south? We wave our handkerchiefs on chance. We take a last look at the gabled ruins over the sea; at the green corn-fields; and the scattered houses; and the beaches of silver sand. Good-by—good-by!

Digitized by Google

The maniac only laughs.

"Luncheon!" she says. "Luncheon in the middle of earthquakes!"

But this sneer at the *White Dove*, because she has no swinging table, is ungenerous. Besides, is not our Friedrich d'or able to battle any pitching with his ingeniously bolstered couch—so that bottles, glasses, plates, and what not are as safe as they would be in a case in the British Museum? A luncheon party on board the *White Dove*, when there is a heavy Atlantic swell running, is not an imposing ceremony. It would not look well as a coloured lithograph in the illustrated papers. The figures crouching on the low stools to leeward; the narrow cushion bolstered up so that the most enterprising of dishes cannot slide; the table-cover plaited so as to afford receptacles for knives and spoons; bottles and tumblers plunged into hollows and propped; Master Fred, balancing himself behind these stooping figures, bottle in hand, and ready to replenish any cautiously proffered wine-glass. But it serves. And Dr. Sutherland has assured us that, the heavier the sea, the more necessary is luncheon for the weaker vessels, who may be timid about the effect of so much rolling and pitching. When we get on deck again, who is afraid? It is all a question as to what signal may be visible to the white house of Carsaig—shining afar there in the sunlight, among the hanging woods, and under the soft purple of the hills. Behold!—behold!—the flag run up to the top of the white pole! Is it a message to us, or only a summons to the *Pioneer*? For now, through the whirl of wind and spray, we can make out the steamer that daily encircles Mull, bringing with it white loaves, and newspapers, and other luxuries of the mainland.

She comes nearer and nearer; the throbbing of the paddles is heard among the rush of the waves; the people crowd to the side of the boat to have a look at the passing yacht; and one well-known figure—standing on the hurricane deck, raises his gilt-braided cap, for we happen to have on board a gentle small creature who is a great friend of his. And she waves her white handkerchief, of course; and you should see what a fluttering of similar tokens there is all along the steamer's decks, and on the paddle boxes. Farewell!—farewell!—may you have a smooth landing at Staffa, and a pleasant sail down the Sound, in the quiet of the afternoon!

The day wears on, with puffs and squalls coming tearing over from the high cliffs of southern Mull; and still the gallant *White Dove* meets and breasts those rolling waves, and sends the spray flying from her bows. We have passed Loch Buy; Garveloch and the adjacent islands are drawing nearer; soon we shall have to bend our course northward, when we have got by Eilean-straid-ean. And whether it is that Mary Avon is secretly comforting herself with the notion that she will soon see her friends in London again, or whether it is that she is proud of being again promoted to the tiller, she has quite recovered her spirits.

Digitized by Google

We hear our singing-bird once more—though it is difficult, amid the rush and swirl of the waters, to do more than catch chance phrases and refrains. And then she is being very merry with the Laird, who is humorously decrying England and the English, and proving to her that it is the Scotch migration to the south that is the very saving of her native country.

"The Lord Chief Justice of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the President of the Royal Academy—the heads and leading men everywhere—all Scotch—all Scotch," says he.

"But the weak point about the Scotch, sir," says this philosopher in the ulster, who is clinging on to the tiller rope, "is their modesty. They are so distrustful of their own merits. And they are always running down their own country."

"Ha, ha!—ho! ho! ho!" roars the Laird. "Verra good! verra good! I owe ye one for that. I owe ye one. Herbert, have ye nothing to say in defence of your native country?"

"You are speaking of Scotland, sir?"

"Ay."

"That is not my native country, you know."

"It was your mother's, then."

Somehow, when by some accident—and it but rarely happened—the Laird mentioned Howard Smith's mother, a brief silence fell on him. It lasted but a second or two. Presently he was saying, with much cheerfulness—

"No, no, I am not one of those that would promote any rivalry between Scotland and England. We are one country now. If the Scotch preserve the best leeterary English—the most pithy and characteristic forms of the language—the English that is talked in the south is the most generally received throughout the world. I have even gone the length—I'm no ashamed to admit it—of hinting to Tom Galbraith that he should exheebit more in London: the influence of such work as his should not be confined to Edinburgh. And jealous as they may be in the south of the Scotch school, they could not refuse to recognise its excellence—eh? No, no; when Galbraith likes to exheebit in London, ye'll hear a stir, I'm thinking. The jealousy of English artists will have no effect on public opeenion. They may keep him out o' the Academy—there's many a good artist has never been within the walls—but the public is the judge. I am told that when his picture of Stonebyres Falls was exheebited in Edinburgh, a dealer came all the way from London to look at it."

"Did he buy it?" asked Miss Avon, gently.

"Buy it!" the Laird said, with a contemptuous laugh. "There are some of us about Glasgow who know better than to let a picture like that get to London. I bought it maself. Ye'll see it when ye come to Denny-mains. Ye have heard of it, no doubt?"

"N—no, I think not," she timidly answers.

Digitized by Google

"No matter—no matter. Ye'll see it when ye come to Denny-mains."

He seemed to take it for granted that she was going to pay a visit to Denny-mains: had he not heard, then, of her intention of at once returning to London?

Once well round into the Frith of Lorn, the wind that had borne us down the Sound of Iona was now right ahead; and our progress was but slow. As the evening wore on, it was proposed that we should run into Loch Speliv for the night. There was no dissentient voice.

The sudden change from the plunging seas without to the quiet waters of this solitary little loch was strange enough. And then, as we slowly beat up against the northerly wind to the head of the loch—a beautiful, quiet, sheltered little cup of a harbour among the hills—we found before us, or rather over us, the splendours of a stormy sunset among the mountains above Glen More. It was a striking spectacle—the vast and silent gloom of the valleys below, which were of a cold and intense green in the shadow; then above, among the great shoulders and peaks of the hills, flashing gleams of golden light, and long swathes of purple cloud touched with scarlet along their edges, and mists of rain that came along with the wind, blotting out here and there those splendid colours. There was an absolute silence in this overshadowed bay—but for the cry of the startled wild-fowl. There was no sign of any habitation, except perhaps a trace of pale blue smoke rising from behind a mass of trees. Away went the anchor with a short, sharp rattle; we were safe for the night.

We knew, however, what that trace of smoke indicated behind the dark trees. By and by, as soon as the gig had got to the land, there was a procession along the solitary shore—in the wan twilight—and up the rough path—and through the scattered patches of birch and fir. And were you startled, Madam, by the apparition of people who were so inconsiderate as to knock at your door in the middle of dinner, and whose eyes, grown accustomed to the shadows of the valleys of Mull, must have looked bewildered enough on meeting the glare of the lamps? And what did you think of a particular pair of eyes—very soft and gentle in their dark lustre—appealing, timid, friendly eyes, that had nevertheless a quiet happiness and humour in them? It was at all events most kind of you to tell the young lady that her notion of throwing up her holiday and setting out for London was mere midsummer madness. How could you—or any one else—guess at the origin of so strange a wish?

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIV.

Before Breakfast.

Who is this who slips through the saloon, while as yet all on board are asleep—who noiselessly ascends the companion-way, and then finds herself alone on deck? And all the world around her is asleep too, though the gold and rose of the new day is shining along the eastern heavens. There is not a sound in this silent little loch: the shores and the woods are as still as the far peaks of the mountains, where the mists are touched here and there with a dusky fire.

She is not afraid to be alone in this silent world. There is a bright and contented look on her face. Carefully and quietly, so as not to disturb the people below, she gets a couple of deck stools, and puts down the large sketch-book from under her arm, and opens out a certain leather case. But do not think she is going to attack that blaze of colour in the east, with the reflected glare on the water, and the bar of dark land between. She knows better. She has a wholesome fear of chromo-lithographs. She turns rather to those great mountain masses, with their mysteriously moving clouds, and their shoulders touched here and there with a sombre red, and their deep and silent glens a cold, intense green in shadow. There is more workable material.

And after all there is no ambitious effort to trouble her. It is only a rough jotting of form and colour, for future use. It is a pleasant occupation for this still, cool, beautiful morning; and perhaps she is fairly well satisfied with it, for one listening intently might catch snatches of songs and airs—of a somewhat incoherent and inappropriate character. For what have the praises of Bonny Black Bess to do with sunrise in Loch Speliv? Or the saucy Arethusa either? But all the same the work goes quietly and dexterously on—no wild dashes and searchings for theatrical effect, but a patient mosaic of touches precisely reaching their end. She does not want to bewilder the world. She wants to have trustworthy records for her own use. And she seems content with the progress she is making.

Here's a health to the girls that we loved long ago,

this is the last air into which she has wandered—half humming and half whistling—

Where the Shannon, and Liffey, and Blackwater flow.

—when she suddenly stops her work to listen. Can anyone be up already? The noise is not repeated; and she proceeds with her work.

Here's a health to old Ireland: may she ne'er be dismayed;
Then pale grew the cheeks of the Irish Brigade!

The clouds are assuming substance now: they are no mere flat washes but accurately drawn objects that have their fore-shortening like any-

Digitized by Google

thing else. And if Miss Avon may be vaguely conscious that had our young Doctor been on board she would not have been left so long alone, that had nothing to do with her work. The mornings on which he used to join her on deck, and chat to her while she painted, seemed far away now. He and she together would see Dunvegan no more.

But who is this who most cautiously comes up the companion, bearing in his hand a cup and saucer?

"Miss Avon," says he, with a bright laugh, "here is the first cup of tea I ever made; are you afraid to try it?"

"Oh, dear me," said she, penitently, "did I make any noise in getting my things below?"

"Well," he says, "I thought I heard you; and I knew what you would be after; and I got up and lit the spirit lamp."

"Oh, it is so very kind of you," she says—for it is really a pretty little attention on the part of one who is not much given to shifting for himself on board.

Then he dives below again and fetches her up some biscuits.

"By Jove," he says, coming closer to the sketch, "that is very good. That is awfully good. Do you mean to say you have done all that this morning?"

"Oh, yes," she says, modestly. "It is only a sketch."

"I think it uncommonly good," he says, staring at it as if he would pierce the paper.

Then there is a brief silence, during which Miss Avon boldly adventures upon this amateur's tea.

"I beg your pardon," he says, after a bit, "it is none of my business, you know—but you don't really mean that you are going back to London?"

"If I am allowed," she answers, with a smile.

"I am sure you will disappoint your friends most awfully," says he, in quite an earnest manner. "I know they had quite made up their minds you were to stay the whole time. It would be very unfair of you. And my uncle: he would break his heart if you were to go."

"They are all very kind to me," was her only answer.

"Look here," he says, with a most friendly anxiety. "If—if—it is only about business—about pictures I mean—I really beg your pardon for intermeddling——"

"Oh," said she, frankly; "there is no secret about it. In fact, I want everybody to know that I am anxious to sell my pictures. You see, as I have got to earn my own living, shouldn't I begin at once and find out what it is like?"

"But look here," he said eagerly, "if it is a question of selling pictures, you should trust to my uncle. He is among a lot of men in the West of Scotland, rich merchants and people of that sort, who haven't inherited collections of pictures, and whose hobby is to make a collection for themselves. And they have much too good sense to buy spurious old masters,

Digitized by Google

or bad examples for the sake of the name: they prefer good modern art, and I can tell you they are prepared to pay for it, too. And they are not fools, mind you; they know good pictures. You may think my uncle is very prejudiced—he has his favourite artists—and—and believes in Tom Galbraith, don't you know—but I can assure you, you won't find many men who know more about a good landscape than he does; and you would say so if you saw his dining-room at Denny-mains."

"I quite believe that," said she, beginning to put up her materials: she had done her morning's work.

"Well," he says, "you trust to him; there are lots of those Glasgow men who would only be too glad to have the chance——"

"Oh, no, no," she cried, laughing. "I am not going to coerce people into buying my pictures for the sake of friendship. I think your uncle would buy every sketch I have on board the yacht; but I cannot allow my friends to be victimised."

"Oh, victimised!" said he, scornfully. "They ought to be glad to have the chance. And do you mean to go on giving away your work for nothing? That sketch of the little creek we were in—opposite Iona, don't you know—that you gave my uncle, is charming. And they tell me you have given that picture of the rocks and sea-birds—where is the place?——"

"Oh, do you mean the sketch in the saloon—of Canna?"

"Yes; why it is one of the finest landscapes I ever saw. And they tell me you gave it to that doctor who was on board!"

"Dr. Sutherland," says she, hastily—and there is a quick colour in her face—"seemed to like it as—as a sort of reminiscence, you know——"

"But he should not have accepted a valuable picture," said the Youth, with decision. "No doubt you offered it to him when you saw he admired it. But now—when he must understand that—well, in fact, that circumstances are altered—he will have the good sense to give it you back again."

"Oh, I hope not," she says, with her embarrassment not diminishing. "I—I should not like that! I—I should be vexed."

"A person of good tact and good taste," says this venturesome young man, "would make a joke of it—would insist that you never meant it—and would prefer to buy the picture."

She answers, somewhat shortly—

"I think not. I think Dr. Sutherland has as good taste as any one. He would know that that would vex me very much."

"Oh, well," says he, with a sort of carelessness, "every one to his liking. If he cares to accept so valuable a present, good and well."

"You don't suppose he asked me for it?" she says, rather warmly. "I gave it him. He would have been rude to have refused it. I was very much pleased that he cared for the picture."

"Oh, he is a judge of art, also? I am told he knows everything."

Digitized by Google

"He was kind enough to say he liked the sketch; that was enough for me."

"He is very lucky; that is all I have to say."

"I dare say he has forgotten all about such a trifle. He has more important things to think about."

"Well," said he, with a good-natured laugh, "I should not consider such a picture a trifle if anyone presented it to me. But it is always the people who get everything they want who value things least."

"Do you think Dr. Sutherland such a fortunate person?" says she. "Well, he is fortunate in having great abilities; and he is fortunate in having chosen a profession that has already secured him great honour, and that promises a splendid future to him. But that is the result of hard work; and he has to work hard now. I don't think most men would like to change places with him just at present."

"He has one good friend and champion, at all events," he says, with a pleasant smile.

"Oh," says she, hastily and anxiously, "I am saying what I hear. My acquaintance with Dr. Sutherland is—is quite recent, I may say; though I have met him in London. I only got to know something about him when he was in Edinburgh, and I happened to be there too."

"He is coming back to the yacht," observes Mr. Smith.

"He will be foolish to think of it," she answers, simply.

At this stage the yacht begins to wake up. The head of Hector of Moidart, much dishevelled, appears at the forecastle, and that wiry mariner is rubbing his eyes; but no sooner does he perceive that one of the ladies is on deck than he suddenly ducks down again—to get his face washed, and his paper collar. Then there is a voice heard in the saloon, calling:—

"Who has left my spirit lamp burning?"

"Oh, good gracious!" says the Youth, and tumbles down the companion incontinently.

Then the Laird appears, bringing up with him a huge red volume entitled *Municipal London;* but no sooner does he find that Miss Avon is on deck than he puts aside that mighty compendium, and will have her walk up and down with him before breakfast.

"What?" he says, eyeing the cup and saucer, "have ye had your breakfast already?"

"Mr. Smith was so kind as to bring me a cup of tea."

"What," he says again—and he is obviously greatly delighted. "Of his own making? I did not think he had as much gumption."

"I beg your pardon, sir?" said she. She had been startled by the whistling of a curlew close by, and had not heard him distinctly.

"I said he was a smart lad," said the Laird, unblushingly. "Oh, aye, a good lad; ye will not find many better lads than Howard. Will I tell ye a secret?"

Digitized by Google

"Well, sir—if you like," said she.

There was a mysterious, but humorous look about the Laird; and he spoke in a whisper.

"It is not good sometimes for young folk to know what is in store for them. But I mean to give him Denny-mains. Whish! Not a word. I'll surprise him some day."

"He ought to be very grateful to you, sir," was her answer.

"That he is—that he is," said the Laird; "he's an obedient lad. And I should not wonder if he had Denny-mains long before he expects it; though I must have my crust of bread, ye know. It would be a fine occupation for him, looking after the estate; and what is the use of his living in London, and swallowing smoke and fog? I can assure ye that the air at Denny-mains, though it's no far from Glasgow, is as pure as it is in this very Loch Speliv."

"Oh, indeed, sir."

They had another couple of turns in silence.

"Ye're verra fond of sailing," says the Laird.

"I am now," she says. "But I was very much afraid before I came; I have suffered so terribly in crossing the Channel. Somehow one never thinks of being ill here—with nice clean cabins—and no engines throbbing——"

"I meant that ye like well enough to go sailing about these places?"

"Oh yes," says she. "When shall I ever have such a beautiful holiday, again?"

The Laird laughed a little to himself. Then he said with a business-like air:—

"I have been thinking that, when my nephew came to Denny-mains, I would buy a yacht for him, that he could keep down the Clyde somewhere—at Gourock, or Kilmun, or Dunoon, maybe. It is a splendid ground for yachting—a splendid! Ye have never been through the Kyles of Bute?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I have been through them in the steamer."

"Ay, but a yacht; wouldn't that be better? And I am no sure I would not advise him to have a steam-yacht—ye are so much more independent of wind and tide; and I'm thinking ye could get a verra good little steam-yacht for 3,000*l*."

"Oh, indeed."

"A great deal depends on the steward," he continues, seriously. "A good steward that does not touch drink, is jist worth anything. If I could get a first-class man, I would not mind giving him two pounds a week, with his clothes and his keep, while the yacht was being used; and I would not let him away in the winter—no, no. Ye could employ him at Denny-mains, as a butler-creature, or something like that."

She did not notice the peculiarity of the little pronoun: if she had, how could she have imagined that the Laird was really addressing himself to her?

Digitized by Google

"I have none but weemen-servants indoors at Denny-mains," he continued, "but when Howard comes, I would prefer him to keep the house like other people, and I will not stint him as to means. Have I told ye what Welliam Dunbaur says—

Be merry, man, and tak not sair in mind——"

"Oh, yes, I remember."

"There's fine common sense in that. And do not you believe the people who tell ye that the Scotch are a dour people, steeped in Calvinism, and niggardly and grasping at the last farthing——"

"I have found them exceedingly kind to me, and warm-hearted and generous——" says she; but he interrupted her suddenly.

"I'll tell ye what I'll do," said he, with decision. "When I buy that yacht, I'll get Tom Galbraith to paint every panel in the saloon—no matter what it costs!"

"Your nephew will be very proud of it," she said.

"And I would expect to take a trip in her myself, occasionally," he added, in a facetious manner. "I would expect to be invited——"

"Surely sir, you cannot expect your nephew to be so ungrateful——"

"Oh," he said, "I only expect reasonable things. Young people are young people; they cannot like to be always hampered by grumbling old fogeys. No, no; if I present any one wi' a yacht, I do not look on myself as a piece of its furniture."

The Laird seemed greatly delighted. His step on the deck was firmer. In the pauses of the conversation she heard something about—

tántará! Sing tántará!

"Will ye take your maid with ye?" he asked of her, abruptly.

The girl looked up with a bewildered air—perhaps with a trifle of alarm in her eyes.

"I, sir?"

"Ha, ha!" said he, laughing, "I forgot. Ye have not been invited yet. No more have I. But—if the yacht were ready—and—and if ye were going—ye would take your maid, no doubt, for comfort's sake?"

The girl looked reassured. She said, cheerfully:—

"Well, sir, I don't suppose I shall ever go yachting again, after I leave the *White Dove*. And if I were, I don't suppose I should be able to afford to have a maid with me, unless the dealers in London should suddenly begin to pay me a good deal more than they have done hitherto."

At this point she was summoned below by her hostess calling. The Laird was left alone on deck. He continued to pace up and down, muttering to himself, with a proud look on his face.

"A landscape in every panel, as I'm a living man! . . . Tom 'll do it well, when I tell him who it's for. . . . The leddies' cabin blue and

Digitized by Google

silver—cool in the summer—the skylight pented—she'll no be saying that the Scotch are wanting in taste when she sees that cabin!

Sing tántará! Sing tántará!
* * * *The Highland army rues*
That ere they came to Cromdale!

And her maid—if she will not be able to afford a maid, who will?—French, if she likes! Blue and silver—blue and silver—that's it!"

And then the Laird, still humming his lugubrious battle-song, comes down into the saloon.

"Good morning, ma'am; good morning! Breakfast ready? I'm just ravenous. That wild lassie has walked me up and down until I am like to faint. A beautiful morning again—splendid!—splendid! And do ye know where ye will be this day next year?"

"I am sure I don't," says his hostess, busy with the breakfast-things.

"I will tell ye. Anchored in the Holy Loch, off Kilmun, in a screw-yacht. Mark my words now: *this very day next year!*"

CHAPTER XXV.

A Protector.

"Oh, ay," says John of Skye, quite proudly, as we go on deck after breakfast, "there will be no more o' the dead calms. We will give Mr. Sutherland a good breeze or two when he comes back to the yat."

It is all Mr. Sutherland and Mr. Sutherland now!—everything is to be done because Mr. Sutherland is coming. Each belaying pin is polished so that one might see to shave in it; Hector of Moidart has spent about two hours in scraping and rubbing the brass and copper of the galley stove-pipe; and Captain John, with many grins and apologies, has got Miss Avon to sew up a rent that has begun to appear in the red ensign. All that he wants now is to have the yacht beached for a couple of days, to have the long slender sea-grass scraped from her hull: then Mr. Sutherland will see how the *White Dove* will sail!

"I should imagine," says the Youth, in an undertone, to his hostess, as we are working out the narrow entrance to Loch Speliv, "that your doctor-friend must have given those men a liberal *pour-boire* when he left."

"Oh, I am sure not," said she, quickly, as if that was a serious imputation. "That is very unlikely."

"They seem very anxious to have everything put right against his coming," he says; "at all events, your captain seems to think that every good breeze he gets is merely thrown away on us."

"Dr. Sutherland and he," she says, laughing, "were very good friends." And then Angus had very bad luck when he was on board:

Digitized by Google

the glass wouldn't fall. But I have promised to bottle up the equinoctials for him—he will have plenty of winds before we have done with him. You must stay, too, you know, Mr. Smith, and see how the *White Dove* rides out a gale."

He regarded her—with some suspicion. He was beginning to know that this lady's speech—despite the great gentleness and innocence of her eyes—sometimes concealed curious meanings. And was she now merely giving him a kind and generous invitation to go yachting with us for another month; or was she, with a cruel sarcasm, referring to the probability of his having to remain a prisoner for that time, in order to please his uncle?

However, the conversation had to be dropped, for at this moment the Laird and his *protégée* made their appearance; and, of course, a deck-chair had to be brought for her, and a foot-stool, and a sunshade, and a book. But what were these attentions, on the part of her elderly slave, compared with the fact that a young man, presumably enjoying a sound and healthy sleep, should have unselfishly got up at an unholy hour of the morning, and should have risked blowing up the yacht with spirits of wine in order to get her a cup of tea?

It was a fine sailing day. Running before a light topsail breeze from the south-east, the *White Dove* was making for the Lynn of Morven, and bringing us more and more within view of the splendid circle of mountains, from Ben Cruachan in the east to Ben Nevis in the north, from Ben Nevis down to the successive waves of the Morven hills. And we knew why, among all the sunlit yellows and greens—faint as they were in the distance—there were here and there on slope and shoulder stains of a beautiful rose-purple that were a new feature in the landscape. The heather was coming into bloom—the knee-deep, honey-scented heather, the haunt of the snipe, and the muircock, and the mountain hare. And if there was to be for us this year no toiling over the high slopes and crags—looking down from time to time on a spacious world of sunlit sea and island—we were not averse from receiving friendly and substantial messages from those altitudes. In a day or two now the first crack of the breechloader would startle the silence of the morning air. And Master Fred's larder was sorely in want of variety.

Northward, and still northward, the light breeze tempering the scorching sunlight that glares on the sails and the deck. Each long ripple of the running blue sea flashes in diamonds; and when we look to the south, those silver lines converge and converge, until at the horizon they become a solid blaze of light unendurable to the eye. But it is to the north we turn—to the land of Appin, and Kingairloch, and Lochaber: blow, light wind, and carry us onward, gentle tide; we have an appointment to keep within shadow of the mountains that guard Glencoe.

The Laird has discovered that these two were up early this morning: he becomes facetious.

"Not sleepy yet, Miss Mary?" he says.

Digitized by Google

"Oh, no—not at all," she says, looking up from her book.

"It's the early bird that catches the first sketch. Fine and healthy is that early rising, Howard. I'm thinking ye did not sleep sound last night: what for were ye up before anybody was stirring?"

But the Laird does not give him time to answer. Something has tickled the fancy of this profound humourist.

"*Kee! kee!*" he laughs; and he rubs his hands. "I mind a good one I heard from Tom Galbraith, when he and I were at the Bridge of Allan; room to room, ye know; and Tom did snore that night. 'What,' said I to him in the morning, 'had ye nightmare, or *delirium tremens*, that ye made such a noise in the night?' 'Did I snore?' said he—I'm thinking somebody else must have complained before. 'Snore!' said I, 'twenty grampuses was nothing to it.' And Tom—he burst out a-laughing. 'I'm very glad,' says he. 'If I snored, I must have had a sound sleep!' A *sound* sleep—d'ye see? Very sharp—very smart—eh?"—and the Laird laughed and chuckled over that portentous joke.

"Oh, uncle, uncle, uncle!" his nephew cried. "You used never to do such things. You must quit the society of those artists, if they have such a corrupting influence on you."

"I tell ye," he says, with a sudden seriousness, "I would just like to show Tom Galbraith that picture o' Canna that's below. No; I would not ask him to alter a thing. Very good—very good it is. And—and—I think—I will admit it—for a plain man likes the truth to be told—there is just a bit jealousy among them against any English person that tries to paint Scotch scenery. No, no, Miss Mary—don't you be afraid. Ye can hold your own. If I had that picture, now—if it belonged to me—and if Tom was stopping wi' me at Denny-mains, I would not allow him to alter it, not if he offered to spend a week's work on it."

After that—what? The Laird could say no more.

Alas! alas! our wish to take a new route northward was all very well; but we had got under the lee of Lismore, and slowly and slowly the wind died away, until even the sea was as smooth as the surface of a mirror. It was but little compensation that we could lean over the side of the yacht, and watch the thousands of "sea-blubbers" far down in the water, in all their hues of blue, and purple, and pale pink. The heat of the sun was blistering; scorching with a sharp pain any nose or cheek that was inadvertently turned towards it. As for the Laird, he could not stand this oven-like business any longer; he declared the saloon was ever so much cooler than the deck; and went down below, and lay at length on one of the long blue cushions.

"Why, John," says Queen T., "you are bringing on those dead calms again. What will Dr. Sutherland say to you?"

But John of Skye has his eye on the distant shore.

"Oh, no, mem," he says, with a crafty smile, "there will not be a dead calm very long."

Digitized by Google

And there, in at the shore, we see a dark line on the water; and it spreads and spreads; the air becomes gratefully cool to the face before the breeze perceptibly fills the sails; then there is a cheerful swinging over of the boom and a fluttering of the as yet unreleased head-sails. A welcome breeze, surely, from the far hills of Kingairloch. We thank you, you beautiful Kingairloch, with your deep glens and your rose-purple shoulders of hills: long may you continue to send fresh westerly winds to the parched and passing voyager.

We catch a distant glimpse of the white houses of Port Appin; we bid adieu to the musically-named Eilean-na-Shuna; far ahead of us is the small white lighthouse at the mouth of the narrows of Corran. But there is to be no run up to Fort William for us to-night; the tide will turn soon; we cannot get through the Corran narrows. And so there is a talk of Ballahulish; and Captain John is trying hard to get Miss Avon to pronounce this Bal-a-chaolish. It is not fair of Sandy from Islay—who thinks he is hidden by the foresail—to grin to himself at these innocent efforts.

Grander and grander grow those ramparts of mountains ahead of us —with their wine-coloured stains of heather on the soft and velvety yellow-green. The wind from the Kingairloch shores still carries us on; and Inversanda swells the breeze; soon we shall be running into that wide channel that leads up to the beautiful Loch Leven. The Laird reappears on deck. He is quite enchanted with the scene around him. He says if an artist had placed that black cloud behind the great bulk of Ben Nevis, it could not have been more artistically arranged. He declares that this entrance to Loch Leven is one of the most beautiful places he has ever seen. He calls attention to the soft green foliage of the steep hills; and to that mighty peak of granite, right in the middle of the landscape, that we discover to be called the Pap of Glencoe. And here, in the mellow light of the afternoon, is the steamer coming down from the north: is it to be a race between us for the Bal-a-chaolish quay?

It is an unfair race. We have to yield to brute strength and steam kettles.

Four to one Argyle came on,

as the dirge of Eric says. But we hear no malice. We salute our enemy as he goes roaring and throbbing by; and there is many a return signal waved to us from the paddle-boxes.

"Mr. Sutherland is no there, mem, I think," says Captain John, who has been scanning those groups of people with his keen eyes.

"I should think not; he said he was coming to-morrow," is the answer.

"Will he be coming down by the *Chevalier* in the morning, or by the *Mountaineer* at night?" is the further question.

"I don't know."

"We will be ashore for him in the morning, whatever," says John of

Digitized by Google

Skye cheerfully; and you would have thought it was his guest, and not ours, who was coming on board.

The roaring out of the anchor chain was almost immediately followed by Master Fred's bell. Mary Avon was silent and *distraite* at dinner; but nothing more was said of her return to London. It was understood that, when Angus Sutherland came on board, we should go back to Castle Osprey, and have a couple of days on shore, to let the *White Dove* get rid of her parasitic seaweed.

Then, after dinner, a fishing excursion; but this was in a new loch, and we were not very successful. Or was it that most of us were watching, from this cup of water surrounded by the circle of great mountains, the strange movings of the clouds in the gloomy and stormy twilight, long after the sun had sunk?

"It is not a very sheltered place," remarked the Laird, "if a squall were to come down from the hills."

But by-and-by something appeared that lent an air of stillness and peace to this sombre scene around us. Over one of those eastern mountains a faint, smoky, suffused yellow light began to show; then the outline of the mountain—serrated with trees—grew dark; then the edge of the moon appeared over the black line of trees; and by-and-by the world was filled with this new, pale light, though the shadows on the hills were deeper than ever. We did not hurry on our way back to the yacht. It was a magical night—the black, overhanging hills, the white clouds crossing the blue vaults of the heavens, the wan light on the sea. What need for John of Skye to put up that golden lamp at the bow? But it guided us on our way back—under the dusky shadows of the hills.

Then below, in the orange-lit cabin, with cards and dominoes and chess about, a curious thing overhead happens to catch the eye of one of the gamblers. Through the skylight, with this yellow glare, we ought not to see anything; but there, shining in the night, is a long bar of pale phosphorescent green light. What can this be? Why green? And it is Mary Avon who first suggests what this strangely luminous thing must be—the boom, wet with the dew, shining in the moonlight.

"Come," says the Laird to her, "put a shawl round ye, and we will go up for another look round."

And so, after a bit, they went on deck, these two, leaving the others to their bézique. And the Laird was as careful about the wrapping up of this girl as if she had been a child of five years of age; and when they went out on to the white deck, he would give her his arm that she should not trip over any stray rope; and they were such intimate friends now that he did not feel called upon to talk to her.

But by-and-by the heart of the Laird was lifted up within him because of the wonderful beauty and silence of this moonlight night.

"It is a great peety," said he, "that you in the south are not brought up as children to be familiar with the Scotch version of the Psalms of David. It is a fountain-head of poetry that ye can draw from all your

Digitized by Google

life long; and is there any poetry in the world can beat it? And many a time I think that David had a great love for mountains—and that he must have looked at the hills around Jerusalem—and seen them on many a night like this. Ye cannot tell, lassie, what stirs in the heart of a Scotchman or Scotchwoman when they repeat the 121st Psalm:—

I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
  From whence doth come mine aid;
My safety cometh from the Lord
  Who heaven and earth hath made.
Thy foot he'll not let slide, nor will
  He slumber that thee keeps:
Behold, He that keeps Israel
  He slumbers not nor sleeps.

Ask your friend Dr. Sutherland—ask him whether he has found anything among his philosophy, and science, and the new-fangled leeterature of the day that comes so near to his heart as a verse of the old Psalms that he learnt as a boy. I have heard of Scotch soldiers in distant countries just bursting out crying, when they heard by chance a bit repeated o' the Psalms of David. And the strength and reliance of them: what grander source of consolation can ye have? 'As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth, even for ever.' What are the trials of the hour to them that believe and know and hope? They have a sure faith; the captivity is not for ever. Do ye remember the beginning of the 126th Psalm—it reminds me most of all of the Scotch phrase

'laughin' maist like to greet'

—'When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south!'"

The Laird was silent for a minute or two; there was nothing but the pacing up and down the moonlit deck.

"And you have your troubles too, my lass," said he, at length. "Oh, I know—though ye put so brave a face on it. But you need not be afraid; you need not be afraid. Keep up your heart. I am an old man now; I may have but few years to reckon on; but while I live ye will not want a friend. . . . Ye will not want a friend. . . . If I forget, or refuse what I promise ye this night, may God do so and more unto me!"

But the good-hearted Laird will not have her go to sleep with this solemnity weighing on her mind.

"Come, come," he says cheerfully, "we will go below now; and you will sing me a song—the Queen's Maries, if ye like—though I doubt but that they were a lot o' wild hizzies."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"He would have me put cartridges in my gun even before we left the road."

Digitized by Google

THE

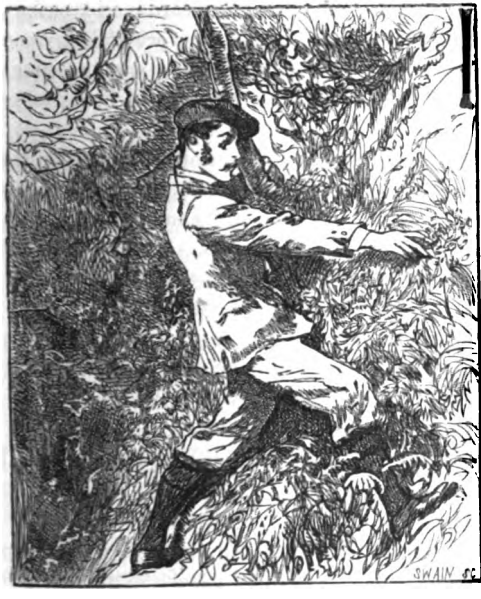
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MARCH, 1880.

White Wings: A Yachting Romance.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"MARY, MARY!"



IS there any one awake and listening—perhaps with a tremor of the heart—for the calling out of "*White Dove*, ahoy!" from the shore? Once the ordinary loud noises of the morning are over—the brief working of the pump, the washing down of the decks—silence reigns once more throughout the yacht. One can only hear a whispering of the rain above.

Then, in the distance, there is a muffled sound of the paddles of a steamer; and that becomes fainter and fainter, while the *White Dove* gradually loses the motion caused by the passing waves. Again there is an absolute stillness; with only that whispering of the rain.

But this sudden sound of oars? and the slight shock against the side of the vessel? The only person on board the yacht who is presentable

Digitized by Google

whips a shawl over her head, darts up the companion way, and boldly emerges into the moist and dismal morning.

"Oh, Angus!" she cries, to this streaming black figure that has just stepped on deck, "what a day you have brought with you!"

"Oh, it is nothing!" says a cheerful voice from out of the dripping macintosh—perhaps it is this shining black garment that makes the wet face and whiskers and hair glow redder than ever, and makes the blue eyes look even bluer. "Nothing at all! John and I have agreed it is going to clear. But this is a fine place to be in, with a falling glass! If you get a squall down from Glencoe, you won't forget it."

"A squall!" she says, looking round, in amazement. Well might she exclaim; for the day is still, and grey, and sombre; the mountains are swathed in mist; the smooth sea troubled only by the constant rain.

However, the ruddy-faced Doctor, having divested himself of his dripping garment, follows his hostess down the companion, and into the saloon, and sits down on one of the couches. There is an odd, half-pathetic expression on his face, as he looks around.

"It seems a long time ago," he says, apparently to himself.

"What does?" asks his hostess, removing her head-gear.

"The evenings we used to spend in this very saloon," says he—looking with a strange interest on those commonplace objects, the draughts and dominoes, the candlesticks and cigar-boxes, the cards and books—"away up there in the north. It seems years since we were at Dunvegan, doesn't it, and lying off Vaternish Point? There never was as snug a cabin as this in any yacht. It is like returning to an old home to get into it."

"I am very glad to hear you say so," says his hostess, regarding him with a great kindliness. "We will try to make you forget that you have ever been away. Although," she added frankly, "I must tell you you have been turned out of your state-room—for a time. I know you won't mind having a berth made up for you on one of those couches."

"Of course not," he said; "if I am not in your way at all. But——"

And his face asked the question.

"Oh! it is a nephew of Denny-mains who has come on board—a Mr. Smith, a very nice young fellow; I am sure you will like him."

There was nothing said in reply to this.

Then the new-comer inquired, rather timidly, "You are all well, I hope?"

"Oh, yes!"

"And—and Miss Avon, too?" said he.

"Oh, yes! But Mary has suffered a great misfortune since you left."

She looked up quickly. Then she told him the story; and in telling him her indignation awoke afresh. She spoke rapidly. The old injury had touched her anew.

Digitized by Google

But, strangely enough, although Angus Sutherland displayed a keen interest in the matter, he was not at all moved to that passion of anger and desire for vengeance that had shaken the Laird. Not at all. He was very thoughtful for a time; but he only said, "You mean she has to support herself now?"

"Absolutely."

"She will naturally prefer that to being dependent on her friends?"

"She will not be dependent on her friends, I know," is the answer; "though the Laird has taken such a great liking for her that I believe he would give her half Denny-mains."

He started a little bit at this; but immediately said—

"Of course she will prefer independence. And, as you say, she is quite capable of earning her own living. Well, she does not worry about it? It does not trouble her mind?"

"That affair of her uncle wounded her very keenly, I imagine, though she said little; but as for the loss of her little fortune, not at all! She is as light-hearted as ever. The only thing is that she is possessed by a mad notion that she should start away at once for London."

"Why?"

"To begin work; I tell her she must work here."

"But she is not anxious? She is not troubled?"

"Not a bit! The Laird says she has the courage of ten men; and I believe him."

"That is all right. I was going to prescribe a course of Marcus Aurelius; but if you have got philosophy in your blood it is better than getting it in through the brain."

And so this talk ended; leaving on the mind of one of those two friends a distinct sense of disappointment. She had been under the impression that Angus Sutherland had a very warm regard for Mary Avon; and she had formed certain other suspicions. She had made sure that he, more quickly than any one else, would resent the injury done to this helpless girl. And now he seemed to treat it as of no account. If she was not troubling herself; if she was not giving herself headaches about it; then, no matter! It was a professional view of the case. A dose of Marcus Aurelius? It was not thus that the warm-hearted Laird had espoused Mary Avon's cause.

Then the people came one by one in to breakfast; and our young Doctor was introduced to the stranger who had ousted him from his state-room. Last of all came Mary Avon.

How she managed to go along to him, and to shake hands with him, seeing that her eyes were bent on the floor all the time, was a mystery. But she did shake hands with him; and said, "How do you do?" in a somewhat formal manner; and she seemed a little paler than usual.

"I don't think you are looking quite as well as when I left," said he, with a great interest and kindness in his look.

"Thank you, I am very well," she said; and then she instantly

Digitized by Google

turned to the Laird and began chatting to him. Angus Sutherland's face burned red; it was not thus she had been used to greet him in the morning, when we were far away beyond the shores of Canna.

And then, when we found that the rain was over, and that there was not a breath of wind in this silent, grey, sombre world of mountain and mist, and when we went ashore for a walk along the still lake, what must she needs do but attach herself to the Laird, and take no notice of her friend of former days? Angus walked behind with his hostess, but he rarely took his eyes off the people in front. And when Miss Avon, picking up a wild flower now and again, was puzzling over its name, he did not, as once he would have done, come to her help with his student-days' knowledge of botany. Howard Smith brought her a bit of wall rue, and said he thought they called it *Asplenium marinum*: there was no interference. The preoccupied Doctor behind only asked how far Miss Avon was going to walk with her lame foot.

The Laird of Denny-mains knew nothing of all this occult business. He was rejoicing in his occupation of philosopher and guide. He was assuring us all that this looked like a real Highland day—far more so than the Algerian blue sky that had haunted us for so long. He pointed out, as we walked along the winding shores of Loch Leven, by the path that rose, and fell, and skirted small precipices all hanging in foliage, how beautiful was that calm, slate-blue mirror beneath, showing every outline of the sombre mountains, with their masses of Landseer mist. He stopped his companion to ask her if she had ever seen anything finer in colour than the big clusters of scarlet rowans among the yellow-green leaves. Did she notice the scent of the meadow-sweet, in the moist air of this patch of wood? He liked to see those white stars of the grass-of-Parnassus; they reminded him of many a stroll among the hills about Loch Katrine.

"And this still Loch Leven," he said at length, and without the least blush on his face, "with the Glencoe mountains at the end of it, I have often heard say was as picturesque a loch as any in Scotland, on a gloomy day like this. Gloomy I call it, but ye see there are fine silver glints among the mist; and—and, in fact, there's a friend of mine has often been wishing to have a water-colour sketch of it. If ye had time, Miss Mary, to make a bit drawing from the deck of the yacht, ye might name your own price—just name your own price. I will buy it for him."

A friend! Mary Avon knew very well who the friend was.

"I should be afraid, sir," said she, laughing, "to meddle with anything about Glencoe."

"Toots! toots!" said he; "ye have not enough confidence. I know twenty young men in Edinburgh and Glasgow who have painted every bit of Glencoe, from the bridge to the King's House inn, and not one of them able to come near ye. Mind, I'm looking forward to showing your pictures to Tom Galbraith; I'm thinking he'll stare!"

The Laird chuckled again.

Digitized by Google

"Oh, aye! he does not know what a formidable rival has come from the south; I'm thinking he'll stare when he comes to Denny-mains to meet ye. Howard, what's that down there?"

The Laird had caught sight of a pink flower on the side of a steep little ravine, leading down to the shore.

"Oh, I don't want it; I don't want it!" Mary Avon cried.

But the Laird was obdurate. His nephew had to go scrambling down through the alders and rowan-trees and wet bracken to get this bit of pink crane's-bill for Miss Avon's bouquet. And of course she was much pleased; and thanked him very prettily; and was it catch-fly, or Herb Robert, or what was it?

Then out of sheer common courtesy she had to turn to Angus Sutherland.

"I am sure Dr. Sutherland can tell us," she says, timidly; and she does not meet his eyes.

"It is one of the crane's-bills, any way," he says, indifferently. "Don't you think you had better return now, Miss Avon, or you will hurt your foot?"

"Oh, my foot is quite well now, thank you!" she says; and on she goes again.

We pass by the first cuttings of the slate-quarries; the men suspended by ropes round their waists and hewing away at the face of the cliff. We go through the long straggling village; and the Laird remarks that it is not usual for a Celtic race to have such clean cottages, with pots of flowers in the window. We saunter idly onwards, towards those great mountain-masses, and there is apparently no thought of returning.

"When we've gone so far, might we not go on to the mouth of the pass?" she asks. "I should like to have a look even at the beginning of Glencoe."

"I thought so," said the Laird, with a shrewd smile. "Oh, ay! we may as well go on."

Past those straggling cottages, with the elder-bush at their doors to frighten away witches; over the bridge that spans the brawling Cona; along the valley down which the stream rushes; and this gloom overhead deepens and deepens. The first of the great mountains appears on our right, green to the summit, and yet so sheer from top to bottom that it is difficult to understand how those dots of sheep maintain their footing. Then the marks on him; he seems to be a huge Behemoth, with great eyes, grand, complacent, even sardonic in his look. But the further and further mountains have nothing of this mild, grand humour about them; they are sullen and awful; they grasp the earth with their mighty bulk below, but far away they lift their lurid peaks to the threatening skies, up there where the thunder threatens to shake the silence of the world.

"Miss Avon," Dr. Sutherland again remonstrates, "you have come five or six miles now. Suppose you have to walk back in the rain?"

Digitized by Google

"I don't mind about that," she says, cheerfully. "But I am dreadfully, dreadfully hungry."

"Then we must push on to Clachaig," says the Laird; "there is no help for it."

"But wait a moment," she says.

She goes to the side of the road, where the great grey boulders and ferns, and moist marsh-grass are, and begins to gather handfuls of "sourocks;" that is to say, of the smaller sheep's sorrel. "Who will partake of this feast to allay the pangs of hunger?"

"Is thy servant a baa-lamb that she should do this thing?" her hostess says, and drives the girl forward.

The inn is reached but in time; for behold there is a grey "smurr" of mist coming down the glen; and the rain is beginning to darken the grey boulders. And very welcome are those chairs, and the bread and cheese and beer, and the humble efforts in art around the walls. If the feast is not as the feasting of the Fishmongers—if we have no pretty boxes to carry home to the children—if we have no glimpses of the pale blue river and shipping through the orange light of the room, at least we are not amazed by the appearance of the Duke of Sussex in the garb of a Highlander. And the frugal meal is substantial enough. Then the question about getting back arises.

"Now, Mary," says her hostess, "you have got to pay for your amusement. How will you like walking seven or eight miles in a thunderstorm?"

But here the Laird laughs.

"No, no," he says, going to the window. "That waggonette that has just come up I ordered at the inn on passing. Ye will not have to walk a step, my lass; but I think we had better be going, as it looks black overhead."

Black enough, indeed, was it as we drove back in this silent afternoon, with a thunderstorm apparently about to break over our heads. And it was close and sultry when we got on board again, though there was as yet no wind. Captain John did not like the look of the sky.

"I said you were going to bring a gale with you, Angus," his hostess remarked to him, cheerfully, at dinner.

"It begins to look like it," he answered, gravely; "and it is getting too late to run away from here if the wind rises. As soon as it begins to blow, if I were John, I would put out the starboard anchor."

"I know he will take your advice," she answers, promptly.

We saw little of Angus Sutherland that evening; for it was raining hard and blowing hard; and the cabin below, with its lit candles, and books, and cards, and what not, was cheerful enough; while he seemed very much to prefer being on deck. We could hear the howling of the wind through the rigging, and the gurgling of the water along the sides of the yacht; and we knew by the way she was swaying that she was pulling hard at her anchor chain. There was to be no beautiful moon-

Digitized by Google

light for us that night, with the black shadows on the hills, and the lane of silver on the water.

A dripping and glistening figure comes down the companion; a gleaming red face appears at the door. Mary Avon looks up from her draughts, but for an instant.

"Well, Angus, what is the report?" says Queen Titania, brightly. "And what is all the noise on deck? And why don't you come below?"

"They have been paying out more anchor chain," says the rough voice from out of the mackintosh; "it is likely to be a nasty night, and we are going to lower the topmast now. I want you to be so kind as to tell Fred to leave out some whisky and some bread and cheese; for John thinks of having an anchor watch."

"The bread and cheese and whisky Fred can get at any time," says she; and she adds with some warmth, "But you are not going to stay on deck on such a night. Come in here at once. Leave your macintosh on the steps."

Is it that he looks at that draught-board? It is Mr. Howard Smith who is playing with Mary Avon. The faithless Miranda has got another Ferdinand now.

"I think I would rather take my turn like the rest," he says, absently. "There may be some amusement before the morning."

And so the black figure turned away and disappeared; and a strange thing was that the girl playing draughts seemed to have been so bewildered by the apparition that she stared at the board, and could not be got to understand how she had made a gross and gigantic blunder.

"Oh, yes; oh, certainly!" she said, hurriedly; but she did not know how to retrieve her obvious mistake.

CHAPTER XXVII.

An Unspoken Appeal.

"What have I done? Is she vexed? Have I offended her?" he asked the next morning, in a rapid manner, when his hostess came on deck. The gale had abated somewhat, but gloom overspread earth and sky. It was nothing to the gloom that overspread his usually frank and cheerful face.

"You mean Mary?" she says, though she knows well enough.

"Yes; haven't you seen? She seems to treat me as though we had never met before—as though we were perfect strangers—and I know she is too kind-hearted to cause any one any pain——"

Here he looks somewhat embarrassed for a moment; but his customary straightforwardness comes to his rescue.

"Yes; I will confess I am very much hurt by it. And—and I should like to know if there was any cause. Surely you must have noticed it?"

Digitized by Google

She had noticed it, sure enough; and, in contrast with that studied coldness which Mary Avon had shown to her friend of former days, she had remarked the exceeding friendliness the young lady was extending to the Laird's nephew. But would she draw the obvious conclusion? Not likely; she was too staunch a friend to believe any such thing. All the same there remained in her mind a vague feeling of surprise, with perhaps a touch of personal injury.

"Well, Angus, you know," she said, evasively; "Mary is very much preoccupied just at present. Her whole condition of life is changed, and she has many things to think of——"

"Yes; but she is frank enough with her other friends. What have I done, that I should be made a stranger of?"

A pathetic answer comes to these idle frettings of the hour. Far away on the shore a number of small black figures emerge from the woods, and slowly pass along the winding road that skirts the rocks. They are following a cart—a common farmyard cart; but on the wooden planks is placed a dark object that is touched here and there with silver—or perhaps it is only the white cords. Between the overhanging gloom of the mountains and the cold greys of the wind-swept sea the small black line passes slowly on. And these two on board the yacht watch it in silence. Are they listening for the wail of the pipes—the wild dirge of Lord Lovat, or the cry of the *Cumhadh na Cloinne?* But the winds are loud, and the rushing seas are loud; and now the rude farmyard cart, with its solemn burden, is away out at the point; and presently the whole simple pageant has disappeared. The lonely burying-ground lies far away among the hills.

Angus Sutherland turns round again, with a brief sigh.

"It will be all the same in a few years," he says to his hostess; and then he adds, indifferently, "What do you say about starting? The wind is against us; but anything is better than lying here. There were some bad squalls in the night."

Very soon after this the silent loch is resounding with the rattle of halyards, blocks, and chains; and Angus Sutherland is seeking distraction from those secret cares of the moment in the excitement of hard work. Nor is it any joke getting in that enormous quantity of anchor chain. In the midst of all the noise and bustle Mary Avon appears on deck to see what is going on, and she is immediately followed by young Smith.

"Why don't you help them?" she says, laughing.

"So I would, if I knew what to do," he says, good-naturedly. "I'll go and ask Dr. Sutherland."

It was a fatal step. Angus Sutherland suggested, somewhat grimly, that, if he liked, he might lend them a hand at the windlass. A muscular young Englishman does not like to give in; and for a time he held his own with the best of them; but long before the starboard anchor had been got up, and the port one hove short, he had had enough of it.

Digitized by Google

He did not volunteer to assist at the throat halyards. To Miss Avon, who was calmly looking on, he observed that it would take him about a fortnight to get his back straight.

"That," said she, finding an excuse for him instantly, "is because you worked too hard at it at first. You should have watched the Islay man. All he does is to call 'Heave!' and to make his shoulders go up as if he were going to do the whole thing himself. But he does not help a bit. I have watched him again and again."

"Your friend, Dr. Sutherland," said he, regarding her for an instant as he spoke, "seems to work as hard as any of them."

"He is very fond of it," she said, simply, without any embarrassment; nor did she appear to regard it as singular that Angus Sutherland should have been spoken of specially as her friend.

Angus Sutherland himself comes rapidly aft, loosens the tiller rope, and jams the helm over. And now the anchor is hove right up; the reefed mainsail and small jib quickly fill out before this fresh breeze; and presently, with a sudden cessation of noise, we are spinning away through the leaden-coloured waters. We are not sorry to get away from under the gloom of these giant hills; for the day still looks squally, and occasionally a scud of rain comes whipping across, scarcely sufficient to wet the decks. And there is more life and animation on board now; a good deal of walking up and down in ulsters, with inevitable collisions; and of remarks shouted against, or with, the wind; and of joyful pointing towards certain silver gleams of light in the west and south. There is hope in front; behind us nothing but darkness and the threatenings of storm. The Pap of Glencoe has disappeared in rain; the huge mountains on the right are as black as the deeds of murder done in the glen below; Ardgour over there, and Lochaber here, are steeped in gloom. And there is less sadness now in the old refrain of Lochaber since there is a prospect of the South shining before us. If Mary Avon is singing to herself about

Lochaber no more! And Lochaber no more!
We'll maybe return to Lochaber no more!

—it is with a light heart.

But then if it is a fine thing to go bowling along with a brisk breeze on our beam, it is very different when we get round Ardshiel and find the southerly wind veering to meet us dead in the teeth. And there is a good sea running up Loch Linnhe—a heavy grey-green sea that the *White Dove* meets and breaks, with spurts of spray forward, and a line of hissing foam in our wake. The zig-zag beating takes us alternately to Ardgour and Appin, until we can see here and there the cheerful patches of yellow corn at the foot of the giant and gloomy hills; then "'Bout ship" again, and away we go on the heaving and rushing grey-green sea.

And is Mary Avon's oldest friend—the woman who is the staunchest

Digitized by Google

of champions—being at last driven to look askance at the girl? Is it fair that the young lady should be so studiously silent when our faithful Doctor is by, and instantly begin to talk again when he goes forward to help at the jib or foresail sheets? And when he asks her, as in former days, to take the tiller, she somewhat coldly declines the offer he has so timidly and respectfully made. But as for Mr. Smith, that is a very different matter. It is he whom she allows to go below for some wrapper for her neck. It is he who stands by, ready to shove over the top of the companion when she crouches to avoid a passing shower of rain. It is he with whom she jokes and talks—when the Laird does not monopolise her.

"I would have believed it of any girl in the world rather than of her," says her hostess, to another person, when these two happen to be alone in the saloon below. "I don't believe it yet. It is impossible. Of course a girl who is left as penniless as she is might be pardoned for looking round and being friendly with rich people who are well inclined towards her; but I don't believe—I say it is impossible—that she should have thrown Angus over just because she saw a chance of marrying the Laird's nephew. Why, there never was a girl we have ever known so independent as she is!—not any one half as proud and as fearless. She looks upon going to London and earning her own living as nothing at all! She is the very last girl in the world to speculate on making a good match—she has too much pride—she would not speak another word to Howard Smith if such a monstrous thing were suggested to her."

"Very well," says the meek listener. The possibility was not of his suggesting, assuredly: he knows better.

Then the Admiral-in-chief of the *White Dove* sits silent and puzzled for a time.

"And yet her treatment of poor Angus is most unfair. He is deeply hurt by it—he told me so this morning——"

"If he is so fearfully sensitive that he cannot go yachting and enjoy his holiday because a girl does not pay him attention——"

"Why, what do you suppose he came back here for?" she says, warmly. "To go sailing in the *White Dove*? No; not if twenty *White Doves* were waiting for him! He knows too well the value of his time to stay away so long from London if it were merely to take the tiller of a yacht. He came back here, at great personal sacrifice, because Mary was on board."

"Has he told you so?"

"He has not; but one has eyes."

"Then suppose she has changed her mind: how can you help it?"

She says nothing for a second. She is preparing the table for Master Fred: perhaps she tosses the novels on to the couch with an impatience they do not at all deserve. But at length she says—

"Well; I never thought Mary would have been so fickle as to go

Digitized by Google

chopping and changing about within the course of a few weeks. However, I won't accuse her of being mercenary; I will not believe that. Howard Smith is a most gentlemanly young man—good-looking, too, and pleasant tempered. I can imagine any girl liking him."

Here a volume of poems is pitched on to the top of the draught-board, as if it had done her some personal injury.

"And in any case she might be more civil to a very old friend of ours," she adds.

Further discourse on this matter is impossible; for our Freidrich d'or comes in to prepare for luncheon. But why the charge of incivility? When we are once more assembled together, the girl is quite the reverse of uncivil towards him. She shows him—when she is forced to speak to him—an almost painful courtesy; and she turns her eyes down, as if she were afraid to speak to him. This is no flaunting coquette, proud of her wilful caprice.

And as for poor Angus, he does his best to propitiate her. They begin talking about the picturesqueness of various cities. Knowing that Miss Avon has lived the most of her life, if she was not actually born, in London, he strikes boldly for London. What is there in Venice, what is there in the world, like London in moonlight—with the splendid sweep of her river—and the long lines of gas-lamps—and the noble bridges? But she is all for Edinburgh: if Edinburgh had but the Moldau running through that valley, and the bridges of Prague to span it, what city in Europe could compare with it? And the Laird is so delighted with her approval of the Scotch capital, that he forgets for the moment his Glaswegian antipathy to the rival city, and enlarges no less on the picturesqueness of it than on its wealth of historical traditions. There is not a stain of blood on any floor that he does not believe in. Then the Sanctuary of Holyrood: what stories has he not to tell about that famous refuge?

"I believe the mysterious influence of that Sanctuary has gone out and charmed all the country about Edinburgh," said our young Doctor. "I suppose you know that there are several plants, poisonous elsewhere, that are quite harmless in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. You remember I told you, Miss Avon, that evening we went out to Arthur's Seat?"

It was well done, Queen Titania must have thought, to expose this graceless flirt before her new friends. So she had been walking out to Arthur's Seat with him, in the summer afternoons?

"Y—yes," says the girl.

"Ay; that is a most curious thing," says the Laird, not noticing her downcast looks and flushed cheeks. "But what were they, did ye say?"

"Umbelliferous plants," replies Angus Sutherland, in quite a matter-of-fact manner. "The *Œnanthe crocata* is one of them, I remember; and I think the *Cicuta virosa*—that is, the Water Hemlock."

"I would jist like to know," says the Laird, somewhat pompously,

Digitized by Google

"whether that does not hold good about the neighbourhood of Glesca also. There's nothing so particular healthy about the climate of Edinburgh, as far as ever I heard tell of. Quite the reverse—quite the reverse. East winds—fogs—no wonder the people are shilpit looking creatures as a general rule—like a lot o' Paisley weavers. But the ceety is a fine ceety, I will admit that; and many's the time I've said to Tom Galbraith that he could get no finer thing to paint than the view of the High Street at night from Prince's Street—especially on a moonlight night. A fine ceety: but the people themselves!—" here the Laird shook his head. "And their manner o' speech is most vexsome—a long, sing-song kind o' yaumering as if they had not sufficient manliness to say outright what they meant. If we are to have a Scotch accent, I prefer the accent—the very slight accent—ye hear about Glesca. I would like to hear what Miss Avon has to say upon that point."

"I am not a very good judge, sir," says Miss Avon, prudently.

Then on deck. The leaden-black waves are breaking in white foam along the shores of Kingairloch and the opposite rocks of Eilean-na-Shuna; and we are still laboriously beating against the southerly wind; but those silver-yellow gleams in the south have increased, over the softly purple hills of Morvern and Duart. Black as night are the vast ranges of mountains in the north; but they are far behind us; we have now no longer any fear of a white shaft of lightning falling from the gloom overhead.

The decks are dry now; camp-stools are in requisition; there is to be a consultation about our future plans, after the *White Dove* has been beached for a couple of days. The Laird admits that, if it had been three days or four days, he would like to run through to Glasgow and to Strathgovan, just to see how they are getting on with the gas-lamps in the Mitherdrum Road; but, as it is, he will write for a detailed report; hence he is free to go wherever we wish. Miss Avon, interrogated, answers that she thinks she must leave us and set out for London; whereupon she is bidden to hold her tongue and not talk foolishness. Our Doctor, also interrogated, looks down on the sitting parliament—he is standing at the tiller—and laughs.

"Don't be too sure of getting to Castle Osprey to-night," he says, "whatever your plans may be. The breeze is falling off a bit. But you may put me down as willing to go anywhere with you, if you will let me come."

This decision seemed greatly to delight his hostess. She said we could not do without him. She was herself ready to go anywhere now—eagerly embraced the Youth's suggestion that there were, according to John of Skye's account, vast numbers of seals in the bays on the western shores of Knapdale; and at once assured the Laird, who said he particularly wanted a sealskin or two and some skarts' feathers for a young lady, that he should not be disappointed. Knapdale, then, it was to be.

Digitized by Google

But in the meantime? Dinner found us in a dead calm. After dinner, when we came on deck, the sun had gone down; and in the pale, tender blue-grey of the twilight, the golden star of Lismore lighthouse was already shining. Then we had our warning lights put up—the port red light shedding a soft crimson glow on the bow of the dingay, the starboard green light touching with a cold, wan colour the iron shrouds. To crown all, as we were watching the dark shadows of Lismore island, a thin, white, vivid line—like the edge of a shilling—appeared over the low hill; and then the full moon rose into the partially clouded sky. It was a beautiful night.

But we gave up all hope of reaching Castle Osprey. The breeze had quite gone; the calm sea slowly rolled. We went below—to books, draughts, and what not; Angus Sutherland alone remaining on deck, having his pipe for his companion.

It was about an hour afterwards that we were startled by sounds on deck; and presently we knew that the *White Dove* was again flying through the water. The women took some little time to get their shawls and things ready; had they known what was awaiting them, they would have been more alert.

For no sooner were we on deck than we perceived that the *White Dove* was tearing through the water without the slightest landmark or light to guide her. The breeze that had sprung up had swept before it a bank of sea-fog—a most unusual thing in these windy and changeable latitudes; and so dense was this fog that the land on all sides of us had disappeared, while it was quite impossible to say where Lismore lighthouse was. Angus Sutherland had promptly surrendered the helm to John of Skye; and had gone forward. The men on the look-out at the bow were themselves invisible.

"Oh, it is all right, mem!" called out John of Skye, through the dense fog, in answer to a question. "I know the lay o' the land very well, though I do not see it. And I will keep her down to Duart, bekass of the tide."

And then he called out—

"Hector, do you not see any land yet?"

"*Cha n'eil!*" calls out Hector, in reply, in his native tongue.

"We'll put a tack on her now. Ready about, boys!"

"*Ready about!*"

Round slews her head, with blocks and sails clattering and flapping; there is a scuffle of making fast the lee sheets; then once more the *White Dove* goes plunging into the unknown. The non-experts see nothing at all but the fog; they have not the least idea whether Lismore lighthouse—which is a solid object to run against—is on port or starboard bow, or right astern, for the matter of that. They are huddled in a group about the top of the companion. They can only listen, and wait.

John of Skye's voice rings out again.

Digitized by Google

"Hector, can you not mek out the land yet?"

"*Cha n'eil!*"

"What does he say?" the Laird asks, almost in a whisper: he is afraid to distract attention at such a time.

"He says 'No,'" Angus Sutherland answers. "He cannot make out the land. It is very thick; and there are bad rocks between Lismore and Duart. I think I will climb up to the cross-trees and have a look round."

What was this? A girl's hand laid for an instant on his arm; a girl's voice—low, quick, beseeching—saying "*Oh, no!*"

It was the trifle of a moment.

"There is not the least danger," says he, lightly. "Sometimes you can see better at the cross-trees."

Then the dim figure is seen going up the shrouds; but he is not quite up at the cross-trees, when the voice of John of Skye is heard again.

"Mr. Sutherland!"

"All right, John!" and the dusky figure comes stumbling down and across the loose sheets on deck.

"If ye please, sir," says John of Skye; and the well-known formula means that Angus Sutherland is to take the helm. Captain John goes forward to the bow: the only sound around us is the surging of the unseen waves.

"I hope you are not frightened, Miss Avon," says Mr. Smith, quite cheerfully; though he is probably listening, like the rest of us, for the sullen roaring of breakers in the dark.

"No—I am bewildered—I don't know what it is all about."

"You need not be afraid," Angus Sutherland says to her, abruptly, for he will not have the Youth interfere in such matters, "with Captain John on board. He sees better in a fog than most men in daylight."

"We are in the safe keeping of one greater than any Captain John," says the Laird, simply and gravely: he is not in any alarm.

Then a call from the bow.

"Helm hard down, sir!"

"Hard down it is, John!"

Then the rattle again of sheets and sails; and as she swings round again on the other tack, what is that vague, impalpable shadow one sees—or fancies one sees—on the starboard bow?

"Is that the land, John?" Angus Sutherland asks, as the skipper comes aft.

"Oh, ay!" says he, with a chuckle. "I was thinking to myself it wass the loom of Duart I sah once or twice. And I wass saying to Hector if it wass his sweetheart he will look for he will see better in the night."

Then by-and-by this other object, to which all attention is summoned: the fog grows thinner and thinner; some one catches sight of a pale, glimmering light on our port quarter; and we know that we have left

Digitized by Google

Lismore lighthouse in our wake. And still the fog grows thinner, until it is suffused with a pale blue radiance; then suddenly we sail out into the beautiful moonlight, with the hills along the horizon all black under the clear and solemn skies.

It is a pleasant sail into the smooth harbour on this enchanted night: the far windows of Castle Osprey are all aglow; the mariners are to rest for a while from the travail of the sea. And as we go up the moonlit road, the Laird is jocular enough; and asks Mary Avon, who is his companion, whether she was prepared to sing "Lochaber no more!" when we were going blindly through the mist. But our young Doctor remembers that hour or so of mist for another reason. There was something in the sound of the girl's voice he cannot forget. The touch of her hand was slight; but his arm has not even yet parted with the thrill of it.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

His Lordship.

Miss Avon is seated in the garden in front of Castle Osprey, under the shade of a drooping ash. Her book lies neglected beside her, on the iron seat; she is idly looking abroad on the sea and the mountains, now all aglow in the warm light of the afternoon.

There is a clanging of a gate below. Presently, up the steep gravel path, comes a tall and handsome young fellow, in full shooting accoutrement, with his gun over his shoulder. Her face instantly loses its dreamy expression. She welcomes him with a cheerful "Good evening!" and asks what sport he has had. For answer he comes across the greensward; places his gun against the trunk of the ash; takes a seat beside her; and puts his hands round one knee.

"It is a long story," says the Youth. "Will it bore you to hear it? I've seen how the women in a country house dread the beginning of the talk at dinner about the day's shooting; and yet give themselves up, like the martyrs and angels they are; and—and it is very different from hunting, don't you know, for there the women can talk as much as anybody."

"Oh! but I should like to hear, really," says she. "It was so kind of a stranger on board a steamer to offer you a day's shooting."

"Well, it was," says he; "and the place has been shot over only once—on the 12th. Very well; you shall hear the whole story. I met the keeper by appointment, down at the quay. I don't know what sort of a fellow he is—Highlander or Lowlander—I am not such a swell at those things as my uncle is; but I should have said he talked a most promising mixture of Devonshire, Yorkshire, and Westmoreland——"

"What was his name?"

"I don't know," says the other, leisurely. "I called him Donald, on chance; and he took to it well enough. I confess I thought it rather odd

Digitized by Google

he had only one dog with him—an old retriever; but then, don't you know, the moor had been shot over only once; and I thought we might get along. As we walked along to the hill, Donald says, 'Dinna tha mind, sir, if a blackcock gets up; knock un ower, knock un ower, sir.'"

At this point Miss Avon most unfairly bursts out laughing.

"Why," she says, "what sort of countryman was he if he talked like that? That is how they speak in plays about the colliery districts."

"Oh, it's all the same!" says the young man, quite unabashed. "I gave him my bag to carry, and put eight or ten cartridges in my pockets. 'A few mower, sir; a few mower, sir,' says Donald; and crams my pockets full. Then he would have me put cartridges in my gun even before we left the road; and as soon as we began to ascend the hill I saw he was on the outlook for a straggler or two, or perhaps a hare. But he warned me that the shooting had been very bad in these districts this year; and that on the 12th the rain was so persistent that scarcely anybody went out. Where could we have been on the 12th? surely there was no such rain with us?"

"But when you are away from the hills you miss the rain," remarks this profound meteorologist.

"Ah! perhaps so. However, Donald said, 'His lordship went hout for an hour, and got a brace and a alf. His lordship is no keen for a big bag, ye ken; but is just satisfied if he can get a brace or a couple of brace afore luncheon. It is the exerceez he likes.' I then discovered that Lord —— had had this moor as part of his shooting last year; and I assured Donald I did not hunger after slaughter. So we climbed higher and higher. I found Donald a most instructive companion. He was very great on the ownership of the land about here; and the old families, don't you know; and all that kind of thing. I heard a lot about the MacDougalls, and how they had all their possessions confiscated in 1745; and how, when the Government pardoned them, and ordered the land to be restored, the Campbells and Breadalbane, into whose hands it had fallen, kept all the best bits for themselves. I asked Donald why they did not complain; he only grinned; I suppose they were afraid to make a row. Then there was one MacDougall, an admiral or captain, don't you know; and he sent a boat to rescue some shipwrecked men, and the boat was swamped. Then he would send another; and that was swamped, too. The Government, Donald informed me, wanted to hang him for his philanthropy; but he had influential friends; and he was let off on the payment of a large sum of money—I suppose out of what the Dukes of Argyll and Breadalbane had left him."

The Youth calmly shifted his hands to the other knee.

"You see, Miss Avon, this was all very interesting; but I had to ask Donald where the birds were. 'I'll let loose the doag now,' says he. Well; he did so. You would have thought he had let loose a sky-rocket! It was off and away—up hill and down dale—and all his whistling wasn't of the slightest use. 'He's a bit wild,' Donald had to admit;

Digitized by Google

'but if I had kent you were agoin' shootin' earlier in the morning, I would have given him a run or two to take the freshness hoff. But on a day like this, sir, there's no scent; we will just have to walk them up; they'll lie as close as a water-hen.' So we left the dog to look after himself; and on we pounded. Do you see that long ridge of rugged hill?"

He pointed to the coast-line beyond the bay.

"Yes."

"We had to climb that, to start with; and not even a glimpse of a rabbit all the way up. 'Ave a care, sir,' says Donald; and I took down my gun from my shoulder, expecting to walk into a whole covey at least. 'His lordship shot a brace and a alf of grouse on this wery knoll the last day he shot over the moor last year.' And now there was less talking, don't you know; and we went cautiously through the heather, working every bit of it, until we got right to the end of the knoll. 'It's fine heather,' says Donald; 'bees would dae well here.' On we went; and Donald's information began again. He pointed out a house on some distant island where Alexander III. was buried. 'But where are the birds?' I asked of him, at last. 'Oh,' says he, 'his lordship was never greedy after the shootin'! A brace or two afore luncheon was all he wanted. He baint none o' your greedy ones, he baint. His lordship shot a hare on this very side last year—a fine long shot.' We went on again: you know what sort of morning it was, Miss Avon?"

"It was hot enough even in the shelter of the trees."

"Up there it was dreadful: not a breath of wind: the sun blistering. And still we ploughed through that knee-deep heather, with the retriever sometimes coming within a mile of us; and Donald back to his old families. It was the MacDonnells now; he said they had no right to that name; their proper name was MacAlister—Mack Mick Alister, I think he said. 'But where the dickens are the birds?' I asked. 'If we get a brace afore luncheon, we'll do fine,' said he; and then he added, 'There's a braw cold well down there that his lordship aye stopped at.' The hint was enough; we had our dram. Then we went on, and on, and on, and on, until I struck work, and sat down, and waited for the luncheon basket."

"We were so afraid Fred would be late," she said; "the men are all so busy down at the yacht."

"What did it matter?" the Youth said, resignedly. "I was being instructed. He had got further back still now, to the Druids, don't you know, and the antiquity of the Gaelic language. 'What was the river that ran by Rome?' 'The Tiber,' I said. 'And what,' he asked, 'was *Tober* in Gaelic but a spring or fountain?' And the Tamar in Devonshire was the same thing. And the various Usks—*uska*, it seems, is the Gaelic for water. Well, I'm hanged if I know what that man did *not* talk about!"

"But surely such a keeper must be invaluable," remarked the young lady, innocently.

Digitized by Google

"Perhaps. I confess I got a little bit tired of it; but no doubt the poor fellow was doing his best to make up for the want of birds. However, we started again after luncheon. And now we came to place after place where his lordship had performed the most wonderful feats last year. And, mind you, the dog wasn't ranging so wild now; if there had been the ghost of a shadow of a feather in the whole district we must have seen it. Then we came to another well where his lordship used to stop for a drink. Then we arrived at a crest where no one who had ever shot on the moor had ever failed to get a brace or two. A brace or two! What we flushed was a covey of sheep that flew like mad things down the hill. Well, Donald gave in at last. He could not find words to express his astonishment. His lordship had never come along that highest ridge without getting at least two or three shots. And when I set out for home, he still stuck to it; he would not let me take the cartridges out of my gun; he assured me his lordship never failed to get a snipe or a blackcock on the way home. Confound his lordship!"

"And is that all the story?" says the young lady, with her eyes wide open.

"Yes, it is," says he, with a tragic gloom on the handsome face.

"You have not brought home a single bird?"

"Not a feather!—never saw one."

"Not even a rabbit?"

"Nary rabbit!"

"Why, Fred was up here a short time ago, wanting a few birds for the yacht."

"Oh, indeed," says he, with a sombre contempt. "Perhaps he will go and ask his lordship for them. In the meantime, I'm going in to dress for dinner. I suppose his lordship would do that, too, after having shot his thirty brace."

"You must not, anyway," she says. "There is to be no dressing for dinner to-day; we are all going down to the yacht after."

"At all events," he says, "I must get my shooting things off. Much good I've done with 'em!"

So he goes into the house, and leaves her alone. But this chat together seems to have brightened her up somewhat; and with a careless and cheerful air she goes over to the flower borders and begins culling an assortment of various-hued blossoms. The evening is becoming cooler; she is not so much afraid of the sun's glare; it is a pleasant task; and she is singing, or humming, snatches of songs of the most heterogeneous character.

Then fill up a bumper!—what can I do less
Than drink to the health of my bonny Black Bess?

—this is the point at which she has arrived when she suddenly becomes silent, and for a second her face is suffused with a conscious colour. It

Digitized by Google

is our young Doctor who has appeared on the gravel path. She does not rise from her stooping position; but she hurries with her work.

"You are going to decorate the dinner-table, I suppose?" he says, somewhat timidly.

"Yes," she answers, without raising her head. The fingers work nimbly enough: why so much hurry?

"You will take some down to the yacht, too?" he says. "Everything is quite ready now for the start to-morrow."

"Oh, yes!" she says. "And I think I have enough now for the table. I must go in."

"Miss Avon," he says; and she stops—with her eyes downcast. "I wanted to say a word to you. You have once or twice spoken about going away. I wanted to ask you—you won't think it is any rudeness. But if the reason was—if it was the presence of any one that was distasteful to you——"

"Oh, I hope no one will think that!" she answers, quickly; and for one second the soft, black, pathetic eyes meet his. "I am very happy to be amongst such good friends—too happy, I think—I, I must think of other things——"

And here she seems to force this embarrassment away from her; and she says to him, with quite a pleasant air—

"I am so glad to hear that the *White Dove* will sail so much better now. It must be so much more pleasant for you, when you understand all about it."

And then she goes into the house to put the flowers on the table. He, left alone, goes over to the iron seat beneath the ash tree; and takes up the book she has been reading, and bends his eyes on the page. It is not the book he is thinking about.

Digitized by Google

The Story of the "Merchant of Venice."

THE discussions concerning the *Merchant of Venice* which have been brought out by its recent revival at the Lyceum betray a state of opinion which Shakespeare could hardly have anticipated. There are people, it seems, who think not only that Shylock is a man more sinned against than sinning, and more interesting and respectable than any of the Christians about him, but that this was the impression which Shakespeare meant to produce; and in the *Theatre* (November 1879, p. 193) Mr. Frederick Hawkins goes so far in this direction as to maintain that the play was suggested, written, and brought out with special reference to a temporary outbreak of intolerance in the English people, caused by an apprehension of "an irruption of Israelites into London," about the year 1594. For the purpose of rebuking this intolerance, we are told, and persuading the frequenters of the Globe that a Jew would be as good as a Christian if they would only treat him like a Christian, Shakespeare chose for the subject of a new play the story of a Jew in Rome, who, having borrowed money of a Christian on condition of letting him cut out a pound of his flesh if he did not repay it on the day named, and being threatened with exaction of the penalty, appealed to the Pope:—a story told, it seems, by Gregorio Leti, in his *Life of Pope Sixtus V.*, and therefore then quite new, of which the editors of the Clarendon Press edition of the play give the following summary:—

"The Pope is the judge, and the evasion of the bond the same as in the play. Both merchant and Jew were condemned to death, the one for premeditated murder, the other for selling his life; but in the issue the sentence was commuted to that of the galleys, with the option of buying off that too by paying each two thousand crowns to the hospital lately founded by the Pope."

The story was apt enough for the exhibition of a Jew in a case to move sympathy; and if Shakespeare's only care had been to make his audience feel what brutal treatment the Jews had to endure at the hands of the Christians, he could have wanted nothing better. But being a manager as well as a poet and politician, he was bound to avoid any risk of offending his audience; and to represent, during the continuance of that popular excitement, a Christian as a cold-blooded murderer, and a Jew as his innocent and unfortunate victim, would have been too great a shock to the prejudices of the time. He went to work more cunningly. By simply changing the parts—making the Jew the inexorable creditor, and the Christian the overthrown debtor—he first

Digitized by Google

beguiled a Jew-abhorring audience to listen with patience to the play, and then contrived to steal into his portrait of the cold-blooded murderer so many traits of magnanimity, tenderness, patriotism, pride in his ancient race, and reverence for his religious traditions; so many respectable prejudices, moral, legal, and theological; such "wealth of ideas and felicitous language;" to arm him also with such a catalogue of wrongs and grievances, and at the same time so to degrade the character of the whole Christian community of which the man who was to suffer the vivisection was a characteristic, distinguished, and universally honoured member; that the people who came to enjoy the sight of a money-lending Jew undergoing poetical justice for attempting to take the life of a money-borrowing Christian should go away full of tender compassion for the defrauded creditor and indignant disgust with the rescued debtor, and, by consequence, in a spirit of toleration for the whole Hebrew race.

It seems a bold speculation, even if the premises be all granted; and yet there is certainly one of them (not to mention the others) which cannot be allowed to pass unquestioned.

When Mr. Hawkins took it for granted that "the idea of the forfeiture of the pound of flesh was manifestly derived from *this* story," he cannot have known that there was another Italian story current at the time, containing not only the general plot, but almost all the leading incidents of the play, presented nearly in the same order, and showing a closer resemblance between the dramatic version and the tale to be dramatised than will be found, I think, in any other play of Shakespeare's not professedly historical. This story, though too Italian in one of its features to be admitted into our popular collections for general reading, is nevertheless well known by name and easily accessible (being referred to by all modern editors in treating of the sources of the play, noticed by all modern antiquarians in their searches after the origin of the legend, and printed at full length in Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*); and to students who are curious as to the manner in which the great artist treated material of this kind in order to fit it for exhibition on the stage, it has a special value; being one in which the transmutation is most perfect and the process most traceable. That Mr. Hawkins knows nothing of it, and that the editors and antiquarians do not know enough to see that it is not *one of the sources*, but *the one source*, of the play, I may take as a proof that it is not familiar to modern readers even of the studious sort; and since it is a very pretty story very prettily told, and loses nothing—I might say, gains considerably—by the entire omission of the only part which has excluded it from good company in modern times, an account of it may be acceptable to many. Its bearing upon the question concerning the secret purpose of the play will be seen when it is before us.

Giannetto, the youngest son of a rich merchant in Florence, receives from his dying father a letter addressed to his dearest friend, Ansaldo,

Digitized by Google

the greatest of the Christian merchants in Venice, who, being a childless man and Giannetto's godfather, had long been anxious to adopt him. This letter, he tells him, is to be instead of any other provision. "Behave well," he says, "and you will certainly be a rich man." Ansaldo welcomes his godson with delight, orders his servants to attend to him as to himself, gives him the keys of his money boxes, and desires him to spend all freely in distinguishing himself and entertaining his friends; and to remember that "the more he gains the goodwill of everybody the more dear he will be to him." Giannetto follows his direction, quickly distinguishes himself in all the qualities of a gentleman, becomes a universal favourite and the most accomplished youth in Venice, and behaves in all ways to his godfather's entire satisfaction. Such a man, it is thought by his friends, should have something more to do—should see more, and be more seen—and two of the most intimate, intending a mercantile voyage to Alexandria, urge him to go with them in a ship of his own. He would like to go if Ansaldo will give him leave; Ansaldo is willing to furnish him if he would like to go. He is provided with a fine ship richly freighted, and the three friends set sail together. The ships keep each other company until Giannetto, early one morning, seeing a fine port and hearing that it is the port of the Lady of Belmonte—a beautiful widow, but dangerous to visit, every visitor being obliged to undertake a certain task on condition that if he accomplishes it he shall take her for his wife and be lord of the port and all the country, but if he fails he shall give up to her all that he brings with him, and many had gone in rich and come out with nothing—resolves to take his chance; sails in, unperceived by his companions; is received with festive welcome; after due warning of the conditions, goes to his trial; fails; loses all; and returns to Venice, much ashamed, and obliged to say that his ship had been wrecked and all on board lost except himself. Ansaldo makes light of the accident. Since his son has come back safe, all is well; he may be cheerful and easy; they have enough left. But when the two friends with whom he had set out return rich from their voyage, and tell him that if he will go with them again the next spring he may easily gain as much as he has lost, Ansaldo, seeing that he could not be happy without making the trial, provides him with another ship, more richly freighted than the first; and the three set out again in company, as before. But Giannetto, whose real aim was to get without their knowledge into the port of Belmonte, contrives to elude them; sails in; is recognised and received as before; undertakes the same task again; again fails; and returns again to Venice, having lost all, and saying that he had suffered another shipwreck. These repeated losses had nearly exhausted Ansaldo's means, but not his affection or his patience; and when the two friends return again very rich from their second voyage, and he finds that Giannetto cannot be happy without one more effort to recover his losses, he sells all that he has in order to provide a third ship for him; and because all

Digitized by Google

that he has is not enough to do it as handsomely as he would, and he "wants still ten thousand ducats, he applies himself to a Jew at Mestri, and borrows them on condition that if they are not paid on the Feast of St. John, in the next month of June, the Jew may take a pound of the merchant's flesh from any part of his body he pleases. Ansaldo agrees, and the Jew has an obligation drawn and witnessed with all the form and ceremony necessary, and then counts him the ten thousand ducats of gold, with which Ansaldo buys what was still wanting for the vessel. . . . . When it is time to depart, Ansaldo tells Giannetto that, since he well knows of the obligation to the Jew, he entreats him, in case any misfortune happens, that he will return to Venice, that he may see him before he dies, and then he can leave the world with satisfaction. Giannetto promises to do everything he conceives may give him pleasure. Ansaldo gives him his blessing, they take their leave, and the ships set out."

Giannetto, still secretly bent upon the Lady of Belmonte, contrives again to give his companions the slip and find his way into her port; is recognised and received as before, and makes himself as popular; but this time, by the help of a friendly hint from a sympathetic damsel who thinks it hard that such devotion should be so rewarded, he avoids the cause of his previous failures, accomplishes his task triumphantly, marries the Lady of Belmonte, is proclaimed sovereign of the country, to the great joy both of herself and all the people, and is still absorbed in the duties and enjoyments of his new fortune, when one day, seeing a procession with torches passing the window, and being told that it is a company of artificers going to make their offerings at the church of St. John, the day being his festival, he suddenly remembers with horror that St. John's festival was Ansaldo's pay-day, and he had forgotten all about it! His wife, observing his emotion, draws from him the confession that "his father was engaged for ten thousand ducats, that the term was expired, and if they were not paid that day he must lose a pound of his flesh." She at once desires him to take a hundred thousand ducats, mount his horse, and not stop till he arrives at Venice; and if he arrives in time to save him, to bring him to Belmonte.

The Jew in the meantime had seized Ansaldo; but, in consideration of his wish to see Giannetto before he died, consents to wait some days, provided that the delay do not invalidate the bond. "'But,' says he, 'if he comes an hundred times over, I will cut off the pound of flesh, according to the words of the obligation.' Ansaldo answered that he was content."

This determination to reject all proposals to redeem the bond by paying the money with cost and interest, which goes for so little with Shylock's modern apologists, is carefully marked and brought out by the teller of the story, who evidently thought it an important feature in the case.

"Everyone," he adds, "at Venice who had heard of the affair was

Digitized by Google

much concerned. Several merchants would have jointly paid the money; the Jew would not hearken to the proposal, but insisted that he might commit this homicide (*anzi voleva fare quello homicidio*), to have the satisfaction of saying (*per poter dire*) that he had put to death the greatest of the Christian merchants."

Giannetto again, as soon as he arrives, offers to pay the whole debt, and as much more as the Jew would demand. The Jew replies he will take no money, since it was not paid at the time due: he will have the pound of flesh. "Everyone blamed the Jew," says the narrator; "but as Venice was a place where justice was strictly administered, and the Jew had his pretensions grounded on public and received forms, nobody dared to oppose him, and when the merchants of Venice applied to him he was inflexible. Giannetto offered him twenty thousand, which he refused; then thirty thousand; afterwards forty, fifty, and at last one hundred thousand ducats. The Jew told him if he would give him as much gold as the city of Venice was worth he would not accept it. 'And,' says he, 'you know little of me if you think I will desist from my demand.'"

While matters stood thus there alighted at an inn in Venice a young man, described by his servant as "a lawyer (*un gentil' huomo giudice*) who had finished his studies at Bologna, and was returning to his own country." And what followed I must give from the old story, without abridgment:—

The landlord upon this shows his guest great civility; and when he attended at dinner, the lawyer inquiring how justice was administered in that city, he answered, "Justice in this place is too severe." "How comes that?" says the lawyer. "I will tell how," says the landlord. "You must know that some years ago there came here a young man from Florence, whose name was Giannetto; he was recommended to the care of a relation, who is called Ansaldo. He behaved here so well as to possess the esteem and affections of every living creature, and never was a youth so well beloved. Now this Ansaldo sent him out three times, each time with a ship of great value. He every time was unfortunate; and to furnish the last Ansaldo was forced to borrow ten thousand ducats of a Jew, on condition that if he did not repay them in June, at the Feast of St. John, the Jew might take a pound of his flesh. This excellent young man is now returned, and offers to pay an hundred thousand ducats. The wicked Jew won't take them, although the best merchants in the city have applied to him, but to no purpose." Says the lawyer, "This question may be easily answered." "If you can answer it," says the landlord, "and will take the trouble to do it, and save this worthy man from death, you will get the love and esteem of a most deserving young man and of all the best men of this city." The lawyer caused a proclamation to be made that whoever had any law matters to determine they should have recourse to him. So it was told to Giannetto that a famous lawyer was come from Bologna, who could decide all cases in law. Giannetto proposed to the Jew to apply to this lawyer. "With all my heart," says the Jew; "but, let who will come, I will stick to my bond." Giannetto and the Jew each told the merits of the cause to the judge, who, when he had taken the bond and read it, said to the Jew, "I must have you take the hundred thousand ducats and release this honest man, who will always have a grateful sense of the favour done to him." The Jew replied, "I will do no such thing." The judge answered, "It will be better for you." The Jew was positive to

Digitized by Google

yield nothing. Upon this they go to the tribunal appointed for such judgments; and our judge speaks in favour of Ansaldo, and, desiring that the Jew may stand forth, "Now," says he, "do you" [to the Jew] "cut off a pound of this man's flesh where you choose." The Jew ordered him to be stripped naked, and takes in his hand a razor, which had been made on purpose. Giannetto seeing this, turning to the judge, "This," says he, "is not the favour I asked of you." "Be quiet," says he; "the pound of flesh is not yet cut off." As soon as the Jew was going to begin, "Take care what you do," says the judge; "if you take more or less than a pound I will order your head to be struck off, and I tell you besides, that if you shed one drop of blood, you shall be put to death. Your paper makes no mention of the shedding of blood, but says expressly that you may take a pound of flesh, neither more nor less; and if you are wise you will take great care what you do." He immediately sent for the executioner to bring the block and axe. "And now," says he, "if I see one drop of blood, off goes your head." The Jew began to be in great fear, and Giannetto in great joy. At length the Jew, after much wrangling, told him, "You are more cunning than I can pretend to be; however, give me the hundred thousand ducats, and I am content." "No," says the judge; "cut off your pound of flesh, according to your bond; I will not give you a farthing. Why did you not take the money when it was offered?" The Jew came down to ninety, and then to eighty thousand; but the judge was still resolute. Giannetto told the judge to give what he required, that Ansaldo might have his liberty; but he replied, "Let me manage him." Then the Jew would have taken fifty thousand. He said, "I will not give you a penny." "Give me at least," said the Jew, "my own ten thousand ducats, and a curse confound you all!" The judge replies, "I will give you nothing. If you will have the pound of flesh, take it; if not, I will order your bond to be protested and annulled." Everyone present was greatly pleased, and, deriding the Jew, said, "He who laid traps for others is caught himself." The Jew, seeing he could gain nothing, tore in pieces the bond in a great rage. Ansaldo was released, and conducted home with great joy by Giannetto. The hundred thousand ducats he carried to the inn to the lawyer, whom he found making ready to depart. "You have done me," says he, "a most important service, and I entreat of you to accept of this money to carry home, for I am sure you have earned it." "I thank you," replied the lawyer; "I do not want money. Keep it and carry it back to your lady, that she may not have occasion to say that you have squandered it away idly." Says Giannetto, "My lady is so good and kind that I might venture to spend four times as much without incurring her displeasure; and she ordered me, when I came away, to bring with me a larger sum." "How are you pleased with the lady?" says the lawyer. "I love her better than any earthly thing," answers Giannetto. "Nature never produced any woman so beautiful, discreet, and sensible, and seems to have done her utmost in forming her. If you will do me the favour to come and see her you will be surprised at the honours she will show you, and you will be able to judge whether I speak truth or not." "I cannot go with you," says the lawyer; "I have other engagements; but, since you speak so much good of her, I must desire you to present my respects to her." "I will not fail," Giannetto answered. "And now let me entreat you to accept some of the money." While he was speaking the lawyer observed a ring on his finger, and said, "If you will give me this ring I shall seek no other reward." "Willingly," says Giannetto; "but as it is a ring given me by my lady to wear for her sake, I have some reluctance to part with it, and she may think, not seeing it on my finger, and will believe that I have given it to a woman that I love, and quarrel with me, though I protest I love her much better than I love myself." "Certainly," says the lawyer, "she esteems you sufficiently to credit what you tell her, and you may say you made a present of it to me; but I rather think you want to give it to some former mistress here in Venice." "So great," says Giannetto, "is the love and reverence that I bear to her that I would not change her for any woman in the world, she is so accomplished in every article."

Digitized by Google

After this he takes the ring from his finger and presents it to him; and embracing each the other, "I have still a favour to ask," says the lawyer. "It shall be granted," says Giannetto. "It is," replied he, "that you do not stay any time here, but go as soon as possible to your lady." "It appears to me a thousand years till I see her," Giannetto answered. And immediately they take leave of each other. The lawyer embarked and left Venice. Giannetto made entertainments and presents of horses and money to his former companions; and having made a great expense for several days, he took leave of his Venetian friends, and carried Ansaldo with him, and some of his old acquaintance accompanied them. Everybody shed tears at his departure, both men and women; his amiable deportment had so gained the goodwill of all. In this manner he left Venice and returned to Belmonte.

The lady arrived some days before, and gave orders to have everything prepared, and the streets lined with tapestry and filled with men armed for the tiltings and exercises; and when Giannetto and Ansaldo were landed, all the court went out to meet them, crying, "Long live our sovereign lord! Long live our sovereign lord!" When they arrived at the palace the lady ran to embrace Ansaldo, but feigned anger against Giannetto, though she loved him excessively; yet the feastings, tilts, and diversions went on as usual, at which all the lords and ladies assisted. Giannetto, seeing that his wife did not receive him with her accustomed good countenance, called her, and inquiring the reason would have saluted her. She told him she wanted not his caresses. "I am sure," says she, "you have been lavish of them to some of your former mistresses at Venice." Giannetto began to make excuses. She asked him where was the ring she had given him. "It is no more than what I expected," cries Giannetto, "and I was in the right to say you would be angry with me; but I swear by all that is sacred, and by your dear self, that I gave the ring to the lawyer who gained our cause." "And I can swear," says the lady with as much solemnity, "that you gave the ring to a woman, and I know it certainly; therefore swear no more." Giannetto said, if what he had told her was not true, he wished every misfortune to fall upon him that might destroy him, and that he said all this to the lawyer when he asked for the ring. The lady replied, "You would have done better to have stayed at Venice with your mistresses, and have sent Ansaldo here; for I hear they all wept when you went away." Giannetto's tears began to fall, and in great sorrow he assured her that what she supposed could not possibly be true. The lady, seeing his tears, which were daggers in her bosom, ran to embrace him, and in a fit of laughter showed him the ring, told everything which he had said to the lawyer, that she was herself the lawyer, and how she obtained the ring. Giannetto was greatly astonished, finding it all true, and was highly delighted with what he had heard, and went out of the chamber and told the story to the nobles and to his companions; and this heightened greatly the love between him and his lady. He then called the damsel who had given him the good advice, and gave her to Ansaldo for a wife; and they spent the rest of their lives in great felicity and contentment.

This is the story told "in a collection of tales called *Il Pecorone*, written by Ser Giovanni, a notary of Florence, about the year 1378," * and published at Milan in 1558; and though it is not known to have been translated into English before 1755, I suppose nobody who reads it and knows the play—two conditions which do not seem to have been generally united—will doubt that Shakespeare had either read or heard it, and that it was from this, and not from Leti's story of the Christian creditor who wanted to perform the operation upon the Jewish debtor, or from any other of the fifteen versions of the bond story enumerated

* Introduction to Clarendon Press edition of *Merchant of Venice*.

Digitized by Google

by Miss Toulmin Smith,* that he derived his idea not only of "the forfeiture of the pound of flesh," but of the entire train of incidents, and the characters and relations of the persons in the drama. Those who are most anxious to give him the credit of originating in the last decade of the sixteenth century "the movement which resulted in the removal of Jewish disabilities" † in the last half of the nineteenth, will be glad to find that he was not constrained to begin the work by transferring to a Jew the crime of a Christian, and this, too, not only in contradiction of the legend, but "in defiance of all probability" (that particular mode of murder being, I suppose, one that none but a Christian would have been *likely* to think of), and all for the sole purpose of conciliating the audience by flattering their prejudices. That Shakespeare ever, on any occasion, flattered a popular prejudice which he did not share, I have yet to learn; but on this occasion at least he had no motive for it. The story which he had to exhibit was sufficiently in accordance with the popular prejudice, and he reproduced it in all its essential features exactly as he found it.

The changes which he introduced were only such as the conversion of a narrative into an actable play required. The action had to be brought within compass; the stage to be peopled; the persons to speak and act, instead of being described; new incidents to be invented or imported for entertainment and variety. But all this he did in careful conformity with the fundamental conception of the several characters as indicated in the old story. Giannetto's first two voyages being ignored, the play begins at once with the preparations for the third, which involves the bargain with the Jew; whereby, without sacrificing anything material, the action is considerably shortened. The original condition of the marriage, being at once unpresentable to a Shakespearian audience and irreconcilable with the lady's character as shown in the sequel, is rejected altogether; but, in substituting for it the device of the three caskets, care is taken to preserve all the essential features of the situation. Bassanio, having run into debt by living beyond his income, resolves to try his chance with a great heiress—a lady for whom, in her father's time, he had conceived an affection which he had reason to believe was mutual—but who could only be sought in marriage upon the perilous condition of losing all if a riddle were not rightly read. To furnish himself for the adventure he has to borrow money from his kinsman and dearest friend and benefactor, Antonio; who, in order to supply him without delay, borrows it from Shylock on the security of the pound of flesh. Thus we have Bassanio and Antonio essentially in the same position towards each other as Giannetto and Ansaldo when parting for the final voyage; while Bassanio, as soon as he has chosen the right casket, is in exactly the same position as Giannetto after the successful per-

* *New Shakespeare Society's Transactions*, 1875–6, Part I.

† The *Theatre*, p. 198.

Digitized by Google

formance of his appointed task; and in all the scenes that follow we have only to imagine Giannetto in Bassanio's place, and we feel that he would have both spoken and acted in the same way—that the characters are, in fact, identical. So, again, the Ansaldo of the story and the Antonio of the play are only two portraits of the same man by different artists, one of whom sees further into him than the other. We are not told by the novelist that Ansaldo suffered from a constitutional depression of spirits, but it probably occurred to Shakespeare as necessary to account for that extraordinary indifference to all mortal accidents (the happiness of his adopted son excepted) which, in the degree to which it is carried in the novel, he appears to have thought impossible in nature after all, and has therefore shown in Antonio much mitigated; for whereas Ansaldo, knowing himself to be ruined, signs the bond with a clear presentiment of the consequence, and yet asks Giannetto for nothing more than a promise that he will see him before he dies, Antonio, when he signs, though short of ready money for the moment, is still in the full flow of his fortunes, and laughs at the idea of being called on to pay the forfeit. It is true that when the danger fronts him, and cannot be escaped, he meets it as patiently, and with as much apparent indifference, as Ansaldo—making no vain remonstrance, not complaining of the rigour of the law, but justifying its execution, and content to die provided only that he may see Bassanio again before he is put to death. But there is a great difference between accepting such a fate with equanimity when it is inevitable, and deliberately incurring it when it is foreseen and may be declined.

Then, again, the absolute inoffensiveness of Ansaldo, who does not seem to have uttered a harsh word or entertained an unkind thought against anybody,—with whom the very man who is avowing his determination to take his life though all Venice were offered him to spare it does not pretend any cause except his being the greatest of the Christian merchants,—seemed to make the Jew's proceeding too monstrous to be endurable by an English audience. Such malice needed some provocation to make it credible enough for the human imagination, and a probable cause of provocation readily offered itself in the disputes which must have occurred on the Rialto between two such men. A man who would enforce his contract for the pound of flesh in such a case was sure in all his transactions to take advantages of the helpless, which a liberal and beneficent merchant would be sure to be disgusted with and interfere to thwart. On such occasions feelings would be expressed and words uttered which would not sting the less for being just and well deserved. And that this was the real history of the revengeful hatred on one side, and the contemptuous dislike on the other, we are made to understand at once, as soon as they meet, by the irritating and sarcastic speech of Shylock (finding himself for the first time at an advantage) and the angry retort which it provokes from Antonio. This revelation of their respective feelings towards each other shows ground enough for Shylock's

Digitized by Google

malice to bring it within the range, not indeed of human *sympathy*, which was not intended, but of possibility in human nature. We can imagine nature so diseased and perverted as to be capable of it without ceasing to be human.

But though we can accept these manifestations of dislike and scorn (the only wrongs he has to complain of) as accounting for Shylock's general disposition towards Antonio, we are not allowed to suppose that his *determination to kill him* (upon which the whole action of the play turns) rested upon any such sentimental considerations. He makes a great parade about them when he replies to the remonstrances of Antonio's friends, but Shakespeare has not forgotten to inform us, through his confidential communications to himself and his own countrymen, what his real motive was for this determination. In his first soliloquy, which is the expression of his secret thoughts, he explains it frankly enough.

> I hate him, for he is a Christian,
> But more for that in low simplicity
> *He lends out money gratis, and brings down*
> *The rate of usance here with us in Venice.*
> If I can catch him once upon the hip,
> I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.

And when he learns from Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of the same trade, that he has a good chance of "catching him upon the hip," he repeats both the why and the how without any reserve or flourish. "I will have the heart of him if he forfeit; for *were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will.*" The Jew in the novel is a sentimentalist in comparison; *he* wants "to be able to *say* that he has put to death the greatest of the Christian merchants." Shylock is a mere utilitarian and man of business. Nor are we left in doubt as to the manner of Antonio's interference with Shylock's merchandise, and the arts by which he has "thwarted his bargains" and "hindered him of half a million." As evidence of the fact itself, indeed, Antonio's word will not go for much with a modern apologist for Shylock; but our question is what *Shakespeare meant us to believe* as to the fact, and of this Antonio's words are good evidence.

> He seeks my life: his reason well I know:
> *I oft delivered from his forfeitures*
> *Many that have at times made moan to me:*
> Therefore he hates me.

That Shakespeare meant us to understand that Shylock insisted upon the pound of flesh because he wanted to remove from his path a man who was in the habit of rescuing debtors from his clutches by helping them to pay their debts, does not in my mind admit of a doubt. That he did *not* mean us to regard it as an interference which Shylock had a right to resent, or his mode of resenting it as a just retaliation, or himself as entitled to one drop of pity for the miscarriage of his plot, or the

Digitized by Google

delight of the bystanders at his discomfiture—who (according to the story), deriding the Jew, said, "He who laid traps for others is caught himself"—as other than the expression of a natural, just, and healthy popular sentiment, appears to me no less certain. And yet it is true that he has contrived to enlist on his behalf "a certain measure" of what Mr. Hawkins calls "sympathy," but I should rather call respect. Why? Not because he was a downtrodden Jew—he would have done as much for the most orthodox and prosperous Christian in the land, and *has* done as much for men as thoroughly depraved as Iago and Edmund in *Lear*—but because, though not the hero of the comedy, he had a conspicuous part in it, and Shakespeare never puts in a conspicuous part a man absolutely devoid of all qualities that can inspire respect or sympathy. Of the Jew in the story we know nothing except in relation to the bond and the forfeiture, and in that part Shakespeare has kept close to his original. But having also to show him in his relation to other men, he endows him with such respectable qualities as are not incompatible with the work he has to do—courage, intellect, eloquence, force of character, strength of will, attachment to his race and creed, and a show of respect for his law. I say a "show;" for though he makes a great profession of religious scruples, he never lets them interfere with business. His religion forbids him to eat or drink with Christians; and yet when he remembers that by "feeding upon the prodigal Christian" he may help to disable Antonio from payment of his debt at the day, he overcomes his objection to the smell of pork and consents to dine with Bassanio. He refuses payment of his debt in full, with 200 per cent. interest for the few days' delay, because he dares not break his oath; he has sworn by the holy Sabbath to have the pound of flesh and nothing else; to forbear would be to "lay perjury upon his soul," which he will not do for Israel. But when he finds that he cannot take the other man's life except at the peril of his own, he does forbear; leaves his soul to settle with the perjury as it can; is ready for any compromise, even though "involving a renunciation of a cherished faith."* What he would not do for Israel he will yet do for himself. From all which I conclude that Shakespeare did not mean us to be taken in by the solemnity of his professions, or to look up to him as the martyr-hero of "an old, untainted religious aristocracy," but only to regard him with a certain interest as a man qualified by nature for a better part than he has chosen.

If the characters of Bassanio, Antonio, and Shylock are manifestly and directly derived from Ser Giovanni's story, it need hardly be said that the Lady of Belmonte suggested the idea of Portia, every one of whose qualities, as we see them brought out in the play by Shakespeare's own hand—the generosity, the affection, the spirit, the intellect, the gaiety and playfulness—he found hints of in the novelist's account of the lady's proceedings between her discovery of Ansaldo's position and her reception of him and her husband at Belmonte.

* The *Theatre* December 1879, p. 261.

Digitized by Google

What need, then, have we to seek further, either for the source of the plot, or the choice of the subject, or the manner of its treatment? To hear our modern apologists, one would suppose that the argument of the play was the persecution of a Jew by Christians; a description of it for which, if the Venetian law had been represented in it as sanctioning the claim of a *Christian* to cut the flesh out of the body of a *Jew*, there would have been some colour. As it is, to call it the persecution of a Christian by a Jew would be nearer the mark. But the truth is that the question at issue has nothing to do with the question of religion. The law of Venice, in so far as it is brought before us in the action, knows a distinction between citizens and aliens, but not between Christians and Jews. It is administered strictly, without respect of race or creed. Nor is there anything in the play, from the first scene to the last, from which it can be inferred that a Jew in Venice laboured under any disadvantage, political or social, as compared with a Christian. On the contrary, pains have been taken to remind us that there was none; all such inequality of dealing being against the cardinal policy of the State. See act iii. scene 3:—

Salarino. I am sure the Duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.
Antonio. The Duke cannot deny the course of law:
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice, if it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of the State:
Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations.

Shylock, it is true, who hates Antonio because he is a Christian, naturally assumes that Antonio quarrels with his usances because he is a Jew. But that is only his own fancy; and even if it had been true it would not have been in point; for his quarrel with Antonio was a private one, with which the State had nothing to do. If Shakespeare had meant his audience to feel that the Hebrew race was suffering under Christian oppression, he would surely have shown them some case in illustration. Yet the only Hebrews he shows us or tells us of are Shylock himself and his friend Tubal—both of them rich, and at liberty to make their bargains in their own way, and assisted by the laws to enforce the terms according to the letter, even when most iniquitous and unjustifiable. And what oppression by the State has Shylock to complain of, either on his own behalf or on that of his sacred nation? When he demands judgment on his bond, the court warns him that if he insists on exacting a penalty involving the death of a citizen he will himself have to pay the penalty prescribed by the law for shedding Christian blood—namely, confiscation of land and goods. When he declines to press his demand on this condition, the court informs him that he has already incurred the penalty prescribed by the law for "seeking the life" of a citizen—namely, the forfeiture of one-half of his goods to the person

Digitized by Google

whose life he had sought, of the other half to the State, and his life to the Duke's mercy. Of which penalty the court enforces so much only as amounts to the sequestration of one-half of his property for the benefit of his daughter; the rest being remitted on two conditions—one, that he bind himself to leave her the whole after his death; the other, that in the meantime he "become a Christian," whatever that may mean. This is the full extent of the oppression, in consideration of which we are called on to excuse him—as the representative victim of unreasoning prejudice against Jews in general—for contriving by a fraudulent contract to murder a rival:—these the "inherited and personal wrongs" by which "his fine nature has become so warped and soured." *

This strange notion, that the secret purpose of the play was to expose the mischiefs of religious intolerance, was probably suggested by the last of the two conditions of pardon. And though I do not think that Shakespeare meant it to be so taken—for I suspect that in the eyes of a Globe audience a Jew consenting to "become a Christian" was simply an infidel seeking admission into the fold and qualifying his soul for salvation—I admit that to modern ears it sounds like a wanton insult, and (as producing on a modern audience an effect the very opposite to that which was intended) ought to be left out. Nothing would be lost by the omission, and it would be universally felt that Christianity could have no interest in enlisting such a recruit.

The other condition has reference to an episode which is not to be found in the original story, but was introduced into the play partly to vary and enliven the action, and partly, perhaps, to account for Shylock's determination to revenge himself on one Christian by giving him a just ground of quarrel with another. In the course of which episode the moral sensibilities of a modern spectator suffer a little shock, from which a judicious adapter might relieve him by the omission of a few lines. Not that I would debar Jessica from seeking relief from her Jewish disabilities by the nearest way. We are all glad to see her at liberty to choose her husband and her religion for herself; to escape from a house which to her was a hell, with only the "merry devil" Launcelot to cheer it; from a father of whose manners she was (not without reason and to her credit, though to her regret) ashamed; and from the chance, should it suit *him*, of having to take "any of the stock of Barrabas" for a husband; nor do many of us object to see advantage taken by Antonio of the pressure which the law enables him to put on Shylock for the purpose of securing a comfortable provision for her. But we all feel that she ought to have left the ducats and jewels behind; and the fact that Shakespeare allowed her to carry them off without a hint of disapprobation from anybody (there being no dramatic necessity for it) suggests a doubt whether in those early days he was fully alive to the impropriety. Perhaps the easy morality of the comic theatre in all such questions—the large privi-

* The *Theatre*, November 1879, p. 194.

Digitized by Google

lege which the young lovers have always enjoyed of deceiving and overreaching the stern parent—had become so familiar as to hide from him the true nature of the transaction; which in so tragic a business as Shylock's revenge cannot be regarded with the levity which comedy permits. But, however that may be, I cannot doubt that the effect would be much better in modern eyes if Jessica were allowed to escape without the treasure. The loss of his daughter to her race and faith would supply Shylock with as fair a motive for vengeance; he could make as much noise about it; and the secret that he really cared more for the ducats than the daughter would not be forced upon the knowledge of his admirers, who regard paternal tenderness as one of his most conspicuous virtues. Two lines struck out from Jessica's part in the sixth scene of the second act, a few from Salanio's in the eighth, and a few more in the interview with Tubal at the beginning of the third act, would (without at all disturbing the action of the play) remove completely our only remaining scruple as to the poetic justice of the final settlement. For though Shylock has escaped with a punishment which anyone who considers the character of his crime must feel to be very far short of his desert, he is far away in Venice among his money bags, and does not trouble us. We saw him baffled and dismissed in the fourth act with general satisfaction, and can leave him to meditate upon the example of Christian mercy which he owes to the generosity of his intended victim at the suggestion of the "wise young judge," and hope that he may profit by it. In the meantime Antonio's fortunes are happily restored by the safe arrival of his argosies with all their merchandise, and everybody is well-pleased.

JAMES SPEDDING.

Digitized by Google

Visions.

FROM THE RUSSIAN OF TOURGUÉNEFF.

I.

I COULD not sleep, and in vain turned from one side of my bed to the other. "The devil take turning tables," thought I, "unstringing one's nerves." However, I had just begun to drop off, when I thought I heard a chord sound near me with a sad and tender note.

I raised my head. The moon appeared at the moment, and its rays touched my face. The inlaid floor of my chamber, in the part lighted by the moon, was white as chalk. The note sounded again, and this time more distinctly. I raised myself on my elbow. My heart throbbed. One minute passed and another. . . . Somewhere in the distance a cock crowed, and another answered from farther away. My head fell back on the pillow. "Am I well?" said I to myself. "When will this tingling in my ears end?"

At last I slept, or thought I slept. I had strange dreams. I was astonished to find myself lying down in my chamber, in my bed, . . . without being able to close my eyes. Again the same sound! I turned again. The moonlight on the floor began gently to collect—to take a form. It raised itself. Right before me, transparent as mist, rose the white figure of a woman.

"Who is there?" asked I, with an effort.

"It is I. I come to see you," said a voice, slight as the rustle of leafage.

"To see me! Who are you?"

"Come at night to the corner of the wood, under the old oak; I will be there."

I wished to see the features of this mysterious figure, and involuntarily trembled. I felt numbed with cold. I was no longer lying down, but was seated on my bed, and where I thought I had seen a phantom, was nothing but a white ray of the moon stretching along the floor.

II.

The day passed slowly. I tried to read, to work. Nothing would do. Night came at last, and my heart beat with the expectation of some occurrence. I lay down and turned my face to the wall.

"Why didn't you come?" murmured a small voice, weak but distinct, and quite close to me in my chamber. It was she! the same phantom, with her calm eyes, calm face, and look full of sadness.

Digitized by Google

"Come," murmured she again.

"I will come," said I, not without terror. The phantom appeared to make a movement towards my bed. It wavered . . . its form became confused and disturbed like mist. After a second nothing remained but the white moonlight on the polished floor.

III.

I passed all the following day in a state of great agitation. At supper I drank nearly the whole of a bottle of wine. Once I went out on the door-step, but came in almost immediately and threw myself on the bed; my pulse beat forcibly. Once more the trembling chord sounded.

I shuddered and dare not look. . . . All at once, it seemed to me that someone, placing hands on my shoulders behind, murmured in my ear, "Come! come! come!" I trembled, raised myself in bed, and answered with a deep sigh, "I am here." The white form was there, bending over my pillow; it smiled gently, and at once disappeared. I had been able, however, to glance at the face, which seemed to me one that I had seen before; but where and when? I got up late, and did nothing but walk about in the fields all day. I went near the old oak at the border of the wood and examined carefully all about.

Towards evening I sat down near the window of my study, and my old housekeeper brought me a cup of tea, but I did not touch it. I could come to no resolution, and asked myself if I was not going mad. The sun was sinking without a cloud in the heavens, when all at once the landscape took a hue of almost supernatural purple, under which shining tint foliage and grass were motionless, and seemed turned to stone. This lustre and immobility, the luminous distinctness of all the outlines, and the sullen silence, presented a contrast, strange and inexplicable. Suddenly, without the slightest sound of warning, a large brown bird flew at the side of my window. I looked at it. It looked at me too, sideways, with round and deep eyes. "You are sent," thought I, "that I may not forget the appointment." Immediately the bird fluttered its down-lined wings and flew away as noiselessly as it came. I remained at my window a long time yet, but all irresolution had now left me. I felt drawn into a magic circle. As a boat is inevitably borne by rapids to the cataract over which it is lost, so I, in the hands of a secret power, felt resistance to be useless. I roused myself at last. The purple colour of the landscape had disappeared, its brilliant hues had become sombre, soon to pass into darkness. The magic stillness was gone too. A light wind rose, and the moon shone brilliantly in the blue heavens. Under its cold rays, the leaves of the trees quivered, now black, now silver. My housekeeper came in with a lighted wax candle, but a gust from the window put it out. I rose hastily, drew my hat over my eyes, and took long strides towards the part of the wood where stood the old oak.

Digitized by Google

IV.

Many years ago this oak had been struck by lightning, and the top of it was broken and dead, but there was life to last ages in the rest of the tree. As I approached a small cloud passed before the moon, and under the thick foliage of the oak it was very gloomy. At first I saw nothing extraordinary; but looking round—my heart suddenly ceased to beat—I perceived a white figure, motionless, near a bush between the oak and the wood. My hair stood on end and I could hardly breathe, but I advanced towards the wood. It was indeed she, the lady of the nightly visits. As soon as I got near her the moon came from behind the obscuring cloud. The phantom seemed to me to be formed of a milky half-transparent mist. Through her face and behind her head I could see a briar swayed by the wind. Eyes and hair, however, were of a darker tone. As she held her hands crossed one over the other, I could see, too, that on one of her fingers she had a ring of pale and brilliant gold. I stopped at two paces from her, and tried to speak, but my voice sank in my throat. It was not, however, precisely a sensation of terror that I felt. She turned her eyes upon me. Her look expressed neither sadness nor gaiety, nothing but solemn attention. I waited for her to speak, but she remained mute and motionless, fixing on me a dead, steady look.

"Here I am," cried I with supreme effort, at last. My voice sounded dull and hoarse.

"I love you," answered her small voice.

"You love me!" cried I, stupefied.

"Give yourself to me," murmured she.

"Give myself to you! But you are a phantom, you have no body." All my ideas were upset. "Who are you—a vapour, a mist, a form of air? Give myself to you? First tell me who you are. Have you lived on the earth? Where do you come from?"

"Give yourself to me. I will do you no harm. Say only these two words, *Take me.*"

Amazed, I looked at her. "What does she say to me? What does it all mean?" thought I. "Shall I venture?"

"Very well," said I, all at once, and with an unexpected impulse, as if some one had pushed me behind, "*Take me.*"

Hardly were the words uttered when the mysterious figure, with an inward laugh that made her tremble all over, advanced towards me; her hands separated and lengthened. I tried to leap back, but already I was in her power. She held me in her arms. My body was lifted about a foot above the earth, and we flew with gentle speed over the motionless grass.

V.

My head was giddy, and at first I involuntarily closed my eyes. When I opened them a moment after we were still flying, and already

Digitized by Google

my wood was out of sight. A vast plain, with dark patches, extended beneath us. I was astounded to perceive that we were at a prodigious height. "I am in the power of the devil!" This thought struck me like a thunderbolt. Until then the idea of diabolic power, of my possible perdition, had not presented itself to my mind. In the meantime we flew on, and it seemed to me that we got higher and higher. "Where are you taking me?" said I at last. "Where you will," said my companion, straining me more closely in her arms. Her face touched mine, and yet I could hardly feel the contact. "Put me on the earth again, I feel uneasy at this height."

"Very well; but shut your eyes and do not breathe. I obeyed, and all at once it seemed to me that I fell like a stone. The wind drew up my hair. When I could recover breath I saw that we flew slowly above the earth, grazing the stalks of the highest herbage.

"Set me down here," said I to her. "What a notion, flying. I'm not a bird."

"I thought you would like it. We never do anything else."

"You? But who are you?"

No answer. "You dare not say."

A plaintive sound like the one that awakened me the first night trembled in my ears, and still we flew near the earth in the humid atmosphere.

"Set me on the earth, then," said I to her. She bowed her head in sign of obedience, and I found myself on my feet. She remained standing before me, and again her hands joined in an attitude of expectation. I began to gain confidence, and set myself to regard her attentively. As at first, her expression seemed to me to be that of a sad resignation.

"Where are we?" I asked her, for I did not recognise the district wherein we had stopped.

"Far from your home; but we can be there in a moment."

"How? Trust myself to you again?"

"I have done you no harm and will not do you any. We will fly together till daybreak—that's all. Wherever your thought goes, in all the lands of the earth, I can carry you. Give yourself to me. Say again, *Take me.*"

"Well! *take me!*"

Her arms again entwined me. I was lifted above the earth, and we began again to fly.

VI.

"Where will you go?" she asked me.

"Right on before us."

"But here is a forest."

"Let us go over it, but not so fast."

Immediately we rose circling, like a woodcock gaining the top of a birch, and then resumed direct flight. It was no longer herbage that

Digitized by Google

seemed to glide under our feet, but the summits of great trees. How strange was the sight, from above, of this forest, with its pointed summits lighted by the moon. One could have supposed it to be an enormous prone beast, asleep and snoring with a dull and indefinite rumble. Every now and then we passed over a glade, and I saw the jagged outline of the shadow projected by the trees. From time to time a hare put forth its plaintive cry in the thicket. Plaintive too was the cry of the screech-owl that passed near us. Perfumes of lovage, of mushrooms, of buds swelling under the dew were borne to us by the air. Cold and sharp the moonlight was shed about us, and the Great Bear twinkled mildly above our heads. Soon the forest disappeared behind us, and we saw a plain with a long line of grey vapour that marked the course of a river. We followed one of its banks above bushes drooping with the heavy humidity of the night. The water in some places glittered with bluish lustre, in others whirled sombre and threatening. Fleeces of vapour floated in places above the current, and I saw, here and there, water lilies spread their white petals, showing the treasures of their beauty like maidens that believe themselves sheltered from all sight. I wished to gather a flower, and already nearly touched the watery mirror; but an unpleasant coolness reached my face as soon as I pulled the lily's rough stalk.

We began to fly from one bank to the other in the manner of curlews, and in fact we roused some of those birds every minute. More than once we passed above fine broods of wild duck, collected in little groups amid the reeds. They did not fly away. One of them hurriedly drew out his head from under his wing and looked, and looked; then, with an occupied air, replaced his beak under the silky down, while his companions uttered a feeble "*kwang, kwang.*" We awoke a heron in a bush of laburnum, and, seeing it leap to its feet and awkwardly shake its wings, I was reminded of a German.* As to fish, we did not see a single one; all slept at the bottom. I began to get used to the sensation of flying, and even to find pleasure in it. Any one that has dreamed he was flying, will understand me. Entirely reassured, I set myself to observe closely the strange being to whom I owed my part in this incredible adventure.

VII.

She was a young woman, whose features were not at all of the Russian type. Her form, of a greyish white, half transparent, with shadows hardly indicated, recalled sculptured figures on an alabaster vase, lighted from within by a lamp. Again it seemed that her features were not unknown to me.

"May I speak to you?" I asked her.

"Speak."

"I see a ring on your finger. Have you lived on the earth? Have you been married?" I stopped; she did not answer.

* The Russian people give to the Germans the nickname "Heron."

Digitized by Google

"What is your name? What are you called?"

"Call me Ellis."

"Ellis? That is an English name. Are you English? Have you known me before?"

"No."

"Why have you appeared to me?"

"I love you."

"Are you happy?"

"Yes, to hover and fly with you in the pure air."

"Ellis," said I suddenly, "are not you a penitent? Aren't you a soul in pain?"

"I do not understand you," murmured she, turning her head.

"In God's name I pray——" I began. She interrupted me.

"What is that you say?" replied she, as if indeed she did not understand. I thought I felt a slight movement in the arm that surrounded me like a cold girdle.

"Have no fear," replied she. "Fear nothing, love." Her face bowed over mine. I felt a strange sensation on my lips, something like the touch of a blunt goad, or of a leech before it bites.

VIII.

We hovered at a considerable height. I looked down. We were passing above a town unknown to me, built on the slope of a large hill. Churches raised themselves above a mass of plank roofs and dark orchards. A large bridge was defined in black over the river in one of its turnings. Gilded domes and metal crosses shone with glimmering lustre. Silent against the sky were marked long well-cranks, amid bushy willows, and as silently a white road entered straight as an arrow at one end of the town, and silently emerged at the other end, to be lost in the monotonous obscurity of endless plains.

"What town is this?" I asked Ellis.

"N——"

"In the government of . . . ?"

"Yes."

"We are a long way from home."

"There is no distance for us."

"Indeed?" A sudden freak seized me. "Carry me to South America."

"Impossible. Day is dawning."

"Ah! we are birds of the night. . . . Well, no matter where, so long as it is far away."

"Shut your eyes and do not breathe," replied Ellis; and we started with the speed of a hurricane. The air burst in my ears with tearing sound. Soon we stopped, but the sound did not; on the contrary, it increased. It was like a terrible howling, an immense uproar.

"Now open your eyes," said Ellis.

Digitized by Google

IX.

I obeyed. "Good God! where am I?"

Above our heads, low heavy thick clouds were crowding and pushing like a pack of infuriated monsters; below us another monster, a raging sea—raging mad. Hurled by the tumult, a white foam rose in boiling mountains, and waves broke with a brutal uproar upon rocks blacker than pitch. The roaring of the tempest, the chill blast from the depths of the abysses, the sounding of the waves striking the cliff, whence one seemed to catch now and then piteous cries or a discharge of artillery in the distance, or yet again the tolling of bells—the grinding of pebbles rolling on the shore—at times the cry of an invisible sea-gull—on a break in the sky the dim *silhouette* of a vessel—everything told of death—death and fear. Struck with horror, again I closed my eyes.

"What is it? where are we?"

"On the south coast of the Isle of Wight before the rocks of Blackgang, where many vessels are lost," replied Ellis, with a mischievous expression of joy as it appeared to me.

"Take me far from here! far from here! home!"

I drew myself together and covered my eyes. It seemed to me that we flew with greater rapidity even than formerly. The wind no longer whistled: it howled and roared in my dress and in my hair. I could not breathe.

"Bear up," said Ellis.

I made an effort to regain my senses. I felt the ground under my feet and heard no noise. All around seemed dead; but the blood pulsed violently in my temples, I felt giddy, and had a ringing in my head. Little by little the giddiness passed away. I drew myself up and opened my eyes.

X.

We were on the shore of my pool. Right before us, through the pointed leaves of a row of willows, was a large sheet of water, above which some slender threads of mist rested as if fastened to the surface; to the right appeared the dull verdure of a field of rye; to the left, through the mist, my orchard with its great trees, silent and humid, and already touched with the breath of morning. Across the pale sky, stretched in oblique lines, two or three small clouds, yellow with the first rays of a dawn that started from God knows what part of the horizon. In the uniform pallor of the sky nothing pointed out where the sun was about to rise. The stars had disappeared. Everything was still, but already awake in the magic calm of early twilight.

"Day is here," said Ellis in my ear. "Adieu till to-morrow." I turned towards her; she had already left the earth, and was raised in the air before me. All at once I saw her place her hands behind her

Digitized by Google

head. Head, hands, and shoulders suddenly took the hue of flesh; in her dark eyes two living sparks trembled; her lips bore a smile of mysterious softness; a charming young woman appeared to me. It lasted only a moment. As if dazzled, she drew backwards and vanished at once like vapour. For some time I remained stupefied and motionless. When I was able to observe, it seemed to me that this hue of flesh, this hue of pale rose that had suddenly animated my vision, was not yet gone, and that the air surrounding me was still impregnated with it—it was the shining of dawn. I felt all at once an immense lassitude, and went towards the house. Passing before the hen-roost, I heard the geese cackling. They are the first birds to awake. Along the roof, at the ends of the thatch-poles, stood rooks like sentinels, all eager to finish their morning toilet, and projected sharply against the milky sky. Suddenly they rose all together, flew to some distance, and arranged themselves in a line without a cry. In the near wood sounded thrice the hoarse cluck of a moor-cock already in search of wild berries in the damp herbage. Feeling a slight shivering, I went in and threw myself on my bed, where a deep sleep soon secured me.

XI.

The following night, when I got near the old oak, Ellis came to meet me like an old acquaintance. All fear on my part had disappeared, and I met her again with almost pleasure. I had given up trying to comprehend the adventure, and I thought of nothing but flying again and satisfying my curiosity. Soon the arm of Ellis clasped me, and we began our flight.

"Let us go to Italy," said I, at her ear.

"Where you like, love," answered she with slow gravity—and slowly and gravely she bowed her head towards me. It struck me that her face was less transparent than before, her features more feminine, less vaporous, and she reminded me of the fair creature that had appeared to me a moment before vanishing in the morning. "This night," continued Ellis, "is the great night." "It rarely comes: when seven times thirteen——" Here I lost several words. "Then," pursued she, "one can see what is concealed at other times."

"Ellis," said I to her in a beseeching tone; "who are you? Tell me now at last."

She extended her long white hand without replying, and indicated with her finger a point in the dark sky where shone among small stars a comet of ruddy aspect.

"What must I understand? Do you live like that comet, wandering between planets and sun? Do you wander from man to man too?"

But Ellis placed her hand over my eyes. A mist white and thick as that which comes from the depths of valleys suddenly surrounded me. "To Italy! to Italy!" murmured she. "This night is the great night."

Digitized by Google

XII

The mist vanished, and I saw beneath us an endless plain; but already the sensation of a soft mild air on my cheeks had warned me that I was no longer in Russia; and besides, this plain did not at all resemble our plains. It was an immense dull surface, without herbage and deserted. Here and there, in all directions, pools of stagnant water shone like pieces of broken mirror. Further off was visible a motionless soundless sea. Large fair stars twinkled in the spaces between large and fair clouds; and from every part rose the hum of a thousand voices, incessant but restrained. These sounds, penetrating, and at the same time low, were the voice of the desert.

"The Pontine Marshes," said Ellis. "Do you hear the frogs? Do you smell sulphur?"

The Pontine Marshes! An impression of solemn sadness came upon me. Why lead me to this dark and abandoned land? We had better have gone to Rome.

"Rome is near," said she; "prepare yourself." We took flight above the old Latin Way. A buffalo plunged in a slimy slough lazily raised his mis-shapen head, the short and rough bristles of which rose in tufts between his back-turned horns. He showed the white of his stupid bad eyes, and blew forcibly through his damp nostrils. He had no doubt smelt us.

"Rome! here is Rome!" said Ellis. "Look before you."

What is that black mass above the horizon? Are these the arches of some giant's bridge? What river does it traverse? Why is it demolished in places? No, it is not a bridge, it is an ancient aqueduct. This, indeed, is the holy Roman Campagna, and below are the mountains of Albano, their summits and the grey masonry of the aqueduct faintly lighted by the rising moon. We rushed forward suddenly, and found ourselves before an isolated ruin. It was impossible to say what it had been; a tomb, or a palace, or baths. Black ivy enveloped it in its melancholy bonds, and below, like a gaping jaw, opened the half-shattered archway of a vault. I was struck with the sepulchral odour that came from all these little trimmed stones whose marble facing had long ago disappeared.

"Come here!" said Ellis, extending her hand. "Here! Say aloud, three times, the name of a great Roman."

"What will happen?"

"You will see."

I reflected a moment. "Divus Caius Julius Cæsar!" cried I, and "Divus Caius Julius Cæsar!" repeated, prolonging the sound, "Cæsar!"

Digitized by Google

XIII.

The last tones of my voice still resounded when I heard—but I despair of describing what I experienced. First, a confused sound of trumpets and clapping of hands, hardly perceptible to the ear and repeated incessantly. It seemed to me that somewhere, either at a prodigious distance or in a bottomless abyss, an innumerable crowd was stirring. It rose and mounted in confused waves always screaming, but with stifled screams like those that escape from the throat in frightful dreams that seem to endure for centuries. Then the air was disturbed and darkened above the ruin, and I thought I saw myriads of shadows landing and defiling, millions of forms, some with helmets, others with pikes. The rays of the moon divided into innumerable blue stars on these helmets and pikes, and all this army, all the multitude pressed, pushed, advanced, enlarged. It seemed animated with unspeakable energy, capable of overthrowing the world. No form, however, was distinct. Suddenly a strange movement agitated the crowd, like immense waves falling and retiring. "Cæsar! Cæsar venit!" repeated a thousand voices like the roaring of leaves in a forest struck by hurricane. A dull stroke resounded, and a head pale and severe, with closed eyelids, and bearing a laurel crown, came slowly from the ruin—the head of the Imperator.

No! there are no human words to describe the fear that seized me. I said, "If this head opens its eyes, if the lips part, I shall die at once."

"Ellis," cried I, "I will not, I cannot. Take me from this brutal and terrible Rome. Come!"

"Faint heart," murmured she, and we resumed our flight. Behind I heard resounding still the iron cry of the Roman legions; then all became dark.

XIV.

"Look," said Ellis, "and calm yourself."

My first sensation was so pleasant, I remember, I could only sigh. Not light, not mist enveloped me, but something of a vaporous azure, soft and silvery. At first I could distinguish nothing, this blue shimmer blinded me. But little by little the noble proportions of a fair wooded mountain revealed themselves to my eyes. A lake stretched under me, with stars trembling in the depths of its waters. I heard the large murmur of the waves plashing on the beach. The perfume of orange groves reached me pure and strong as a wave, and with it, as pure and strong, came the sound of a woman's voice. Attracted, fascinated by the perfume and by this voice, I wished to descend. We directed our flight towards a magnificent marble palace that was set against a cypress wood. The sounds came from the open windows. The lake, powdered with the pollen of flowers, beat the walls of the palace in soft undulations, and

Digitized by Google

right in front, enveloped in a luminous vapour, rose an island, adorned with the dark foliage of orange-trees and laurels, with porticoes and colonnades, temples and statues, high and harmonious from the midst of the waters.

"Isola Bella, Lake Maggiore," said Ellis.

I said only "Ah!" and we still descended.

The voice, growing ever louder, attracted me irresistibly. I wished to see the form that produced such sounds on such a night. We were close to the window. Within a chamber furnished in Pompeian style, and resembling a museum of antiquities more than a modern apartment, surrounded by Greek sculptures, Etruscan vases, rare plants, and precious fabrics, lighted from above by two lamps enclosed within globes of crystal, a young woman was seated before a piano. With head slightly thrown back, and with half-closed eyes, she sang an Italian air,—sang and smiled. She smiled, and it seemed to me that a faun of Praxiteles, young and careless as herself, as soft and as voluptuous, smiled too from its marble niche surrounded with rose-laurel, across the light vapour that escaped from an antique perfume-pan set on a bronze tripod. She was alone. Enchanted by the sounds and by the beauty, drunk with the brilliance and the perfumes of the night, moved to the depths of the heart by the sight of such youth, freshness, and happiness, I completely forgot my companion; I forgot by what mysterious means I had penetrated the secrets of an existence so secluded and so strange. I wished to step on the window and speak. My whole body trembled with violent commotion, as if I had touched a Leyden-jar.

The face of Ellis, in spite of its transparence, had become dark and threatening. In her immensely wide-open eyes burned an expression of profound malignity.

"Let us go away," said she brusquely—and again wind, noise, stupefaction. Instead of the cry of the legions, the last sharp note of the songstress lingered long in my ears. We stopped; but the same sharp note sounded always, although I felt another atmosphere and other emanations. A bracing freshness as from a large river reached me, with odours of hay, hemp, and smoke. To this long-sustained note succeeded another note, and then a third, but of so marked a character, and with such familiar modulations, that I at once said to myself, "That is a Russian singer, and a Russian air." And at the same time all objects about appeared distinctly to me.

XV.

We were on the banks of a large river. To the left, out of sight, stretched mown fields with enormous hay-stacks; to the right, also out of sight, was seen the surface of the water. Near the shore long boats moved gently at anchor, stirring their pointed masts, like fingers making signs. In the one from which the song came was a small fire whose

Digitized by Google

light was reflected in red rays that trembled on the ripples of the river. All around on river and land other fires twinkled, but whether they were far or near sight could not determine. At times they were suddenly extinguished, at others darted forth and cast a lively brightness. Innumerable crickets chirped incessantly in the grass, not less persistent than the frogs of the Pontine Marshes. The sky was cloudless but low and dark, and birds, flying invisibly, emitted from time to time plaintive cries.

"Aren't we in Russia?" I asked my guide.

"This is the Volga," replied she. We flew down the river.

"Why did you hurry me just now from that delightful land?" demanded I. "It displeased you, no doubt. Did not you feel a little jealous?"

The lips of Ellis trembled, and her look became threatening, but all at once her features resumed their usual immobility.

"I wish to go home," said I to her.

"Wait! wait!" replied she. "To-night is the great night. It won't come again for so long. You shall see. Wait a bit."

On this we crossed the Volga, grazing the water obliquely, and by a succession of springs, in the manner of swallows flying before a storm. The deep waves murmured beneath us, and a keen wind struck us with its cold and powerful wing. Soon in the gloom appeared the right bank of the river with a steep and deeply-creviced escarpment. We drew near.

"Cry *Saryn na Kitchkou*," * said Ellis to me in a whisper. I was as yet hardly recovered from the fright the apparition of the Roman phantoms had caused me, and was weary besides, and a prey to I know not what vague feeling of sadness. In fact, I dare not. I would not pronounce the fatal words, persuaded that, as in the Wolf's Valley of the *Freischütz*, they would conjure up some frightful monster. But in spite of myself my lips opened, and with a weak, unnatural voice, I cried: "*Saryn na Kitchkou!*"

XVI.

As before the Roman ruin, at first all remained still. Suddenly, at my very ears, rang a coarse brutal laugh, followed by a groan, and by the sound of a body falling in the water and struggling. I looked around me—nobody;—but after a moment the shores re-echoed the sounds, and a frightful tumult soon rose in all directions. It was a veritable chaos of sounds: human cries, whistles, furious vociferations, together with laughter,—laughter more frightful than the rest—splashing of oars in the water, axe-strokes, the crash of broken doors and chests, the screech of moving tackle, the grinding of wheels on the strand, the stamping of a multitude of horses, the tolling of alarum-bells, the clanking of chains, the mournful crackling of immense fires, drunken songs, gnashing of

* War-cry of pirates of the Volga.

Digitized by Google

teeth, and frightful oaths, lamentations and desperate prayers, military commands and death rattles, confused with joyful sounds of the fife, and the cadence of furious rounds. One could distinguish cries of "Kill him! hang him! drown! burn! at it! go ahead! no quarter!" I heard all, even to the panting of exhausted lungs, and yet, far as my sight could reach, nothing appeared—no change in the aspect of the country. Before us the river flowed silent and dark, and the shores appeared even more rude and deserted than formerly. I turned to Ellis; she placed a finger on her lips.

"Stepan Timoféitch!* here is Stepan Timoféitch!" A cry rose from all parts of the plain, "Long live our little father, our hetman, our foster-father." Suddenly, although I continued to see nothing, I seemed conscious of a gigantic body advancing towards me, and a terrible voice cried out, "Frolka! where are you, you dog? Fire, everybody! onwards! Cut me down these aristocrats, make me some mincemeat!" I felt the heat of a flame close to me, the acrid odour of smoke penetrated my nostrils, and at the same time something warm and liquid like jets of blood spurted on my face and on my hands. Savage laughs burst around us. I lost consciousness, and when I came to myself found I was with Ellis, floating gently at the border of my wood, not far from the old oak.

"Do you see that pretty little path?" said she, "down there, where the moon shines, and overhung by those two birches? Shall we go there?"

I was so overcome, so exhausted, that I could say to her only: "To the house."

"You are at the house," said Ellis.

In fact, I was at my door alone: Ellis had disappeared. The watch-dog drew near, eyed me defiantly, and ran off howling. By an effort I gained my bed, and, without undressing, fell asleep.

XVII.

The next day, during the whole morning I was unwell and could hardly move about at all; but this bodily uneasiness was not what troubled me most. I was ashamed of my conduct and vexed with myself. "Faint heart!" I kept repeating. "Yes, Ellis is right. Why was I afraid? Why not have taken advantage of the opportunity? I might have seen Cæsar himself, and fear had made me lose my head. I must whimper and run away like a child at the sight of a birch-rod. As to Razine, that was indeed different—in my quality as a gentleman and landowner—but even then, why be afraid? "Faint heart! faint heart! And besides, it was only in a dream that you would have seen all this," said I to myself. I called my housekeeper.

"Marfa, at what time did I go to bed yesterday? Do you remember?"

---

* Stepan Razine, Don Cossack, pirate on the Volga and Caspian, and chief of an insurrection in the seventeenth century, was broken on the wheel alive.

Digitized by Google

"Lord! who can say, my foster-father? Rather late, I do believe. You went out of the house when it began to be dark; and in your bedroom you stamped with the heels of your boots, after midnight. Towards morning—yes, towards morning—yes; and it is two days that you've done that. Is there anything the matter?"

"Good! these flights," thought I, "these journeys in the air, how doubt them them any longer? Marfa! how do I look to-day?" I asked her, suddenly.

"How look? Pardon, let me, see. Your cheeks are rather hollow; yes, and you are pale, my foster-father. Stop! and you are as yellow as wax."

Slightly confused, I dismissed Marfa.

"I shall die of it, or lose my senses by it," said I to myself, meditating near the window. "It is necessary that it should end; it is terrible; my heart beats strangely. When I flew it seemed as if one drank my heart's blood, or as if it exuded like the sap of an incised birch-tree in summer. All that is not natural. And Ellis?—she plays with me like a cat with a mouse, and yet she does not seem to wish me ill. Well, I'll never trust myself with her again. I will consider as long as I can—and—— But if she drank my blood?—horrible! Besides, such rapid flights must do me harm. They say that in England it is forbidden to go more than seventy-five miles an hour on the railways." I pondered for a long time; but at ten o'clock that evening I was near the old oak.

XVIII.

The night was dark, dull, and cold; there was a sensation of rain in the air. To my great surprise I found no one under the oak. I walked about for some time. I went as far as the wood and came back, trying continually to penetrate the depth of darkness. No one! I waited long enough and then I called Ellis several times, raising my voice more and more each time; but without effect. I was sad, almost mortified. Already I thought no longer of the danger that had just now occupied me. I could not bring myself to think that Ellis would come no more. "Ellis! Ellis! come then! Won't you come?" cried I, for the last time. A raven, roused by my voice, sprang suddenly from the top of a neighbouring tree, striking noisily amid the branches. Ellis did not appear. With hanging head I returned towards the house. I was already on the border of my pool, and the light from my chamber window at times shone full, and at others disappeared behind the foliage of my apple-trees. It seemed to me like the eye of a guardian charged to watch me. Suddenly I perceived a slight motion in the air behind me, and at the same moment I felt myself raised, just as a quail is carried away by a hawk. It was Ellis: her cheek touched mine, and I felt her arm embrace me like a close band. She spoke, and her voice, always restrained to a slight murmur, affected me like an icy breath

Digitized by Google

entering my ears. "It is I," said she. I felt, at the same time, both pleasure and terror. We flew at a short distance above the ground.

"You did not want to come then, to-day?" demanded I.

"You were vexed at it? Then you love me? Oh! you are mine!"

These last words troubled me. I did not know what to say to her.

"I was kept away," pursued she. "They watch me."

"Who, then, has power to restrain you?"

"Where will you go?" demanded Ellis, as usual, without answering my question.

"Carry me to Italy—to the border of the lake—you know."

She shook her head to say no. At this moment I remarked for the first time that her face was no longer transparent. A faint redness, one might say, was visible over her milky whiteness. I regarded her eyes, and their look struck me disagreeably. There was in the depths of them a sinister movement, almost imperceptible but incessant, which reminded one of a benumbed serpent that the sun begins to revive.

"Ellis," cried I, "who are you? Tell me, I pray you."

She shrugged her shoulders. I was vexed and wished to give her a lesson. The notion came to me of asking her to take me to Paris. There, thought I, she shall have some real cause for being jealous.

"Ellis," said I, "you have no fear of great cities, have you?—of Paris, for instance?"

"No."

"No?—Not of the strongly lighted parts, like the Boulevards?"

"It is not the light of day."

"Very well, then, take me to the Boulevard des Italiens."

She threw over my head one end of her long sleeve, and I found myself in a white darkness impregnated with odour of poppy. All disappeared at once,—light, sound, and almost consciousness. I hardly felt that I still lived; and this species of annihilation was not without sweetness. All at once the cloud dissolved. Ellis withdrew her sleeve from over my head, and I saw beneath me a number of vast buildings and plenty of light and movement—I was at Paris.

XIX.

I had already been at Paris, and soon recognised the part to which Ellis had brought me: it was the garden of the Tuileries, with its old horse-chestnuts, its iron gates, its fortress ditches, and its Zouaves on duty like stags. We passed before the Palace, before Saint-Roche, and stopped at the Boulevard des Italiens.

A crowd of people, young and old, workmen in blouses, fine-dressed women, hastened over the causeways. Restaurants and cafés gilded to excess sparkled with a thousand flames. Omnibuses, cabs, carriages of all kinds and aspects passed each other on the pavement. All shone and swarmed so that one knew not where to turn one's eyes. Yet, strange to say, I was not at all tempted to quit my aerial observatory,

Digitized by Google

so high and so pure, to mix in this human swarm. I felt a vapour rise to me, red, warm, dull, and of dubious odour. Too many human lives were amassed in the rout. I was hesitating, when, shrill and hard as the grinding of old iron, the voice of a *lorette* rose to me. This shameless voice affected me like the bite of vermin, and I figured to myself a face stony, mean, bloated, a true Parisian expression, usurer's eyes, white and red paint, frizzled hair, a crude bunch of artificial flowers in a little hat, agnails and a monstrous crinoline. I figured to myself also at the same time one of our good countrymen of the steppe, newly landed in Paris, and trotting miserably after this vile, venal doll. I saw him trying to hide his awkwardness under an affectation of coarseness, lisping with falsetto voice, imitating the manners of the waiters at Vefour's, making curvets and platitudes. Filled with disgust, I said to myself, "It is not here that Ellis need be jealous."

In the meantime I noticed we had begun to descend, and Paris sent out all its sounds and all its odours to meet us.

"Stop!" said I to Ellis; "don't you find this stifling?"

"It was you that wanted to come to Paris."

"I was wrong; I have changed my mind. Carry me far away from here, Ellis, I beg you. Stop! there is actually Prince Koulmametof walking on the Boulevards, and his friend Serge Varaxine, who beckons with his hand and says to him, 'Ivan Stépanitch, come and sup with me; I have engaged Rigolboche herself.' Take me away, Ellis, far from Mabille, from the Maison-Dorée, from the Jockey-Club; far from close-cropped soldiers and their fine barracks; from policemen with 'imperials' on their chins; far from glasses of muddy absinthe; from players at dominoes and players at the Bourse; from red ribbons at the coat button-hole and at the button-hole of the overcoat; far from M. Foy, inventor of the marriage agency; from the gratuitous consultations of Dr. Charles Albert; from courses of lectures and from blue-books; from Parisian comedies, Parisian operettas, Parisian politeness, and Parisian ignorance. Come on! come on! come on!"

"Look down," said Ellis; "you are already no longer above Paris."

I opened my eyes. In fact, a dark plain, marked here and there with the white lines of the roads, flew rapidly beneath us, and far in the horizon, like the glimmer of an immense fire, rose towards the sky the reflection of the innumerable flames that light the capital of the world.

XX.

The sleeve of Ellis fell again over my eyes. Again I lost consciousness; and again the cloud dissolved. What is this? What park is this, with its wall-like avenues of trimmed lime-trees, with isolated firs resembling parasols, with porticoes and temples in the Pompadour style, with rococo statues of tritons and nymphs within strangely carved basins

Digitized by Google

in the style of Bernini, surrounded by balustrades of smoky marble? Can it be Versailles? No, it is not Versailles; a little palace in a style of architecture just as rococo stands out against a wood of bushy oaks. The moon is rather dull, veiled by a slight mist, and over the ground is what appears to be a thin cloud of steam: the eye cannot determine whether it is the reflection of the moon, or really vapour. Further off, in one of the basins, floats a sleeping swan, whose lengthened back reminds one of the snow of our steppes hardened by frost. Here and there glowworms shine like diamonds in the grass, and upon the bases of the statues.

"We are near Mannheim," said Ellis, "and this is the park of Schwetzingen."

"Ah! we are in Germany," thought I, and listened. All was silent except a solitary and invisible fount that fell in a basin. It seemed to me that the water said continually, "There, there, there, always there."

In the middle of the path, between two walls of foliage, I perceived a gentleman in a laced coat, red heels, and rounded ruffles, with sword striking his calves, give his hand with exquisite grace to a fair lady in hooped petticoats, becurled and befrosted with powder. Pale and strange figures! I wished to see them closer, but they disappeared at once, and I heard only the incessant babbling of the fount.

"These are walking dreams," said Ellis to me. "Yesterday one could see other things—many things; to-night dreams themselves fly from human gaze. Come on!"

We rose, and began to fly in so direct a manner that I did not perceive the slightest movement, and all objects beneath appeared to run to meet us. Sombre mountains, rugged and clothed with woods, grew and flew under our eyes, followed by other mountains, with their undulations, their ravines, their glades, their points of light from cottages sleeping on the borders of brooks. Mountains ever succeeded mountains. We were in the middle of the Black Forest.

Ever mountains, and ever forests—magnificent forests, old but vigorous. The night is clear. I can distinguish the species of the trees, especially tall pines, with straight, white trunks. Roebucks show themselves occasionally at the borders of the woods; resting elegantly on their slender legs, gracefully turning the head, they stand sentinel, vigilantly pricking their fine ears. The ruins of a donjon, at the summit of a bare rock, raise sadly their rugged, indented outline. Above the forgotten old stones a star twinkles peacefully. From a little black lake comes, like a mysterious wail, the crystalline note of frogs answering each other. Other sounds, prolonged and melancholy as the tremors of an Eolian harp, reach me. We are in the land of legends. The same thin vapour touching the earth that I had noticed at Schwetzingen extends here in all directions. In the valleys, especially, it is most marked. I can count five—six—ten distinct shadows upon the slopes of the mountains, and over the whole vast and monotonous extent the

Digitized by Google

moon reigns peacefully. The air is light and lively: I feel light myself, and singularly calm.

"Ellis," said I, "don't you love this country?"

"I? I love nothing!"

"What! not even me?"

"Ah! yes, you," replied she nonchalantly.

I thought her arm tightened round me with new force.

"Onwards! onwards!" cried she, with a sort of cold passion.

XXI.

A cry, loud and prolonged in rolls, sounded unexpectedly over our heads, and was at the same time repeated in front of us.

"It is a rear-guard of cranes flying north," said Ellis. "Let us join them, shall we?"

"Yes, let us fly with the cranes."

Thirteen fine powerful birds, arranged in a triangle, advanced rapidly, by rare strokes of their vigorous, curved wings. Stretching out neck and feet, and presenting their strong breasts, they rushed forwards with such impetuosity that the air whistled around them. It was strange at this height, and so far from all living creatures, to see this energetic and bold life, this irresistible volition. While continuing victoriously to cleave the air, without stop or stay, the cranes from time to time exchanged cries with their comrade at the apex of the triangle; and there was something of gravity and pride, of a sentiment of absolute confidence in these ringing cries, in this aerial conversation. "We will fly to the end in spite of fatigue," they seemed to say, encouraging each other. And it came to my mind that in Russia—in the entire world—there are few men that resemble these birds.

"Now we are flying in Russia," said Ellis to me.

This was not the first time I had noticed that Ellis was aware of my thoughts.

"Do you wish to change the route?" asked she.

"Change? No; I come from Paris. Carry me to Petersburg."

"Now?"

"At once. Only cover me with your sleeve for fear of dizziness."

Ellis extended her hand; but before the cloud enveloped me I felt upon my lips the contact of that blunt goad whose soft sting I had already experienced.

XXII.

"Attenti-on!" This prolonged cry reached my ears. "Attenti-on!" was returned with desperation from the distance. "Attenti-on!" the cry died out somewhere at the end of the world. I shook myself. A large gilded arrow was before my eyes, and I recognised the fortress of Petersburg.

Pale night of the north! But is it night? Is it not rather a wan

Digitized by Google

and sickly day? I have never loved the night of Petersburg, but this time I was almost scared by it. The profile of Ellis had completely disappeared, dissolved like a morning cloud before a July sun; and yet I continued to see distinctly my own body awkwardly suspended in the air at the height of Alexander's column.

Now behold us at Petersburg. This is indeed the city: these broad, deserted streets, the colour of ashes; these houses of whitish grey, greyish yellow, and lilac grey, covered with worn stucco, with their windows sunk in the walls, their crudely coloured sign-boards, their iron railings on the steps; the dirty fruit shops, the Greek pediments in plaster, the signs, the horse-troughs, the bodies of police. Here is the gilded cupola of St. Isaac's; the Bourse where nothing is done, and its medley of colours; the granite walls of the fortress, and the pavements of broken wood. I recognised the boats with cargoes of hay and faggots. I again found the odours of dust, cabbages, mats, bark, stables, the door-keepers petrified in their cloaks, the hackney coachmen sleeping curled up on their old droskies. Yes, here is indeed our Palmyra of the north.

All is lighted up and revealed with a distinctness that makes the heart sick, and all sleeps sadly together in this dull, but transparent atmosphere.

The hectic rose of yestereven's twilight is not yet effaced; it will last till morning in this pale and starless sky. It is reflected in long rays on the cloudy surface of the Neva, which murmurs as it pushes its cold blue waves to the sea.

"Let us fly," said Ellis.

And without waiting for an answer she bore me to the other side of the river, above the square of the palace, near the foundry. Beneath us I heard footsteps and voices. A band of young men, with a fatigued air, passed down the street, speaking among themselves of a grisettes' ball. "Sub-lieutenant Stolpakoff VII.,"* cried suddenly a sentinel, waking with a start, near a heap of rusty cannon balls. A little farther off, at an open window, I perceived a young woman in a rumpled silk dress, with bare arms, hair in a reticle of pearls, and a cigarette in her mouth. She was reading a book devotedly. It was a volume from the pen of a very modern Juvenal.

"Fly quickly!" said I to Ellis.

In an instant the little wood of stunted firs and the mossy gardens that surround Petersburg had flown beneath us. We directed ourselves right south. Sky and earth became little by little darker and darker. Sickly night, sickly day, sickly city—we left all far behind.

XXIII.

We flew more slowly than usual, and my eyes could follow the changes that showed themselves by degrees in my native land. It was

* In the Russian army, officers of the same name are distinguished by a number.

Digitized by Google

an endless panorama: woods, heaths, fields, ravines, rivers, widely separated churches and villages, and then again fields, ravines, rivers. I was in an ill-humour, indifferent, bored; but if I was bored and vexed, it was not because I was flying over Russia. No! but this land, the flat extent beneath me, all the surface of the world, with its fleeting population, mean, choking with want, sorrow, sickness, stuck to this miserable heap of dust—this fragile creviced crust; the excrescences on this grain of sand, our planet, whereon has filtered a mould by us dignified with the name "vegetable kingdom;" these flies of men, ten times more despicable than flies, their mud dwellings, the little vestiges of their miserable and monotonous quarrels, their ridiculous fights against the immutable and the inevitable—ah! how odious it all was to me. My heart rebelled, and I could no longer contemplate a picture so insignificant, a caricature so trivial. I was bored—worse than bored. I no longer felt even pity for my fellows; all my feelings merged into one that I dare hardly avow—disgust, and, what is worse, disgust for myself.

"Stop!" murmured Ellis, "or I can carry you no longer: you get heavy."

"Home!" said I to her, in a tone I should have used to my coachman towards four in the morning, coming from a dinner with one of my Moscow friends, after having talked of the future of Russia and of what should really be understood by 'communistic principles.'"

"Home!" said I to her, and closed my eyes.

XXIV.

I soon reopened them. Ellis embraced me in a strange manner; she almost pushed me. I looked at her and all my blood froze. Any one that has seen a human face express, unexpectedly and without apparent cause, the most living fear, will understand my feeling. Fear, the most poignant terror, contracted and distorted the features of Ellis. I never saw anything like it on living face. An inanimate phantom, a superhuman creature, a shadow, and this unheard-of fright. "Ellis! what is the matter?" demanded I.

"She! it is she!" responded Ellis with effort. "It is she!"

"She! Who?"

"Don't name her, don't," stammered she hurriedly. "We must fly. All is over, and for ever. Look, there she is!"

I turned my eyes in the direction of her trembling hand, and perceived something—a something truly frightful. This something was still more frightful that it had no definite form. It was a heavy dark mass, of a yellowish black, spotted like the belly of a lizard. It stretched itself slowly over the earth like a reptile, with enormous movements, now up, now down—large and regular balancings like the beating of the wings of a bird of prey preparing to seize its quarry. At times it came to earth by hideous leaps as a spider springs on a fly caught in its

Digitized by Google

toils. "What are you, frightful mass"? At its approach—I saw it and felt it—everything was seized with torpor, everything in dissolution. A venomous, pestiferous chill spread around, and at the sensation of this chill the heart revolted, the eyes ceased to see, the hair stood on end. It was a moving force, insurmountable, not to be arrested, which formless, sightless, thoughtless, sees all and knows all; as eager as a bird of prey to seize its victim, cunning as a serpent, and like a serpent licking and killing its prey with its icy sting.

"Ellis! Ellis!" cried I, shuddering, "it is death! it is death!"

The plaintive sound that I had already heard came from the lips of Ellis, but this time with more of the accent of human despair. We hurried our flight, which became disordered. Round and round Ellis rose and plunged in the air, turning incessantly, and changing direction like a wounded partridge that seeks to lure the dogs from its nest. And in the meantime from this horrible mass long feelers detached themselves, lank and hideous like those of a polyp, lengthening in pursuit, and stretching towards us a species of claws. A gigantic spectre mounted on a pale horse suddenly appeared in the heaven. Ellis redoubled her desperate efforts. "She has seen! It is done, I am lost!" cried she, in a voice broken with sobs. "Alas! unhappy! I might have—life would have been for me—and now—annihilated! annihilated!" Hearing these last words hardly articulated, I lost consciousness.

XXV.

When I came to myself I was stretched on my back on the grass, and in all my limbs I felt a dull pain, such as follows a violent fall. Day was breaking and objects were already distinct. At some distance from me a road bordered with small willows passed by a birch wood. This place was known to me. I began to recollect all the events of the night, and shivered in thinking of the horrible vision that had presented itself to my eyes. "But why?" said I to myself, "why was Ellis so terrified? Must she, she also, submit to his rule? Perhaps she is not immortal, perhaps she is predestined to destruction—to annihilation. How is it possible?"

I heard a faint sigh near me, and turned my head. At two paces from me, lay, stretched motionless on the grass, a young woman dressed in a long white robe. Her long hair was loose, and one of her shoulders bare. Her left hand was behind her head, the other reposed on her breast; her eyes were closed, and on her lips I perceived a slight red foam. Was this Ellis? But Ellis was a phantom, and before me was a woman of flesh and blood. I drew myself towards her and, bending over her face, said, "Ellis, is it you?" Immediately, with a slow tremor, her eyelids opened, and her great black eyes fixed upon me. I was as if pierced through, absorbed with her regard, and at almost the same moment to my lips clung warm, soft, other lips, but with the

Digitized by Google

odour of blood. I felt her burning bosom on mine, while her arms were clasped together around me. "Good-bye! good-bye! for ever!" said she with a dying voice. And all disappeared. I rose tottering like a drunken man, and searched a long time around, every now and then passing my hands over my face. At last I found myself on the road to N——, about a mile from my home. The sun was risen when I reached my chamber. The following night I awaited, and, I confess, not without terror, the appearance of my phantom, but it never came again. One night I went under the old oak, but saw nothing extraordinary. I hardly regret these strange interviews. I have meditated much on my adventure. I feel sure that science cannot explain it, and that legends and traditions report nothing similar. Who was Ellis? A vision, a soul in pain, an evil spirit, a vampire? It often seemed to me that Ellis was a woman I had known formerly. I made immense efforts to recall where I had seen her—once—to-day, at this moment I remember—where? No! all confounds itself in my memory as in a dream. Yes, I have for long reflected upon it, and what will surprise no one, I am no further advanced in it. I can't decide to consult my friends for fear of passing for a madman. At last I have decided to think no more about it, and indeed I have many other things to think of. On one hand has come the emancipation of the serfs, with the disposal of estates; on the other, my health is seriously altered. I suffer in the chest; I have wakefulness and a dry cough. I have got much thinner, my face is pale as death. The doctor says that my blood is impoverished, calls my sickness an anæmia, and orders Gastein. My steward swears that without me he will not know how to settle with the peasants. Faith! let them settle with themselves.

But what mean certain sounds, perfectly distinct and clear, as from a harmonica, that I hear whenever one speaks before me of the death of anybody? They become stronger and stronger, louder and louder. And why this doleful shiver at the sole thought of annihilation?

Digitized by Google

The Philosophy of Drawing-rooms.

In most English middle-class houses there exists, or till lately existed, a certain mysterious and reverend apartment known as the drawing-room. In homes of the most Philistine type this solemn shrine of the household gods was always regarded as far too sacred for common and everyday usage. The family lived, as a rule, in the "parlour," or the breakfast-room, and only approached the higher sanctum on Sunday afternoons. Visitors were duly ushered into it for formal calls, and other important diplomatic ceremonies took place within its mystical precincts. Some enlightened denizens of Philistia even went so far as to retire into its awful shades after dinner, and there decorously to play their accustomed rubber. But none of them ever dreamt of really *living* in the drawing-room. They would almost as soon have thought of living in Canterbury Cathedral, or in the state apartments of Windsor Castle. The drawing-room was set apart for purposes of pomp and solemnity, and it would have been sacrilege to desecrate its sanctity with the trivialities of ordinary life. It was the Capitol and the Acropolis of that ceremonial government which, as Mr. Herbert Spencer assures us, formed the earliest and the most long-lived form of human administration.

The appearance and appurtenances of the good old-fashioned drawing-room were strictly in keeping with these its solemn functions. It had a desolate and comfortless air, as though it were not habitually inhabited. The chairs were straight-backed and fragile, so that to lean against them was perilous to life and limb. The sofas were constructed so as to afford a maximum of corners with a minimum of repose. A large and ricketty rosewood table, with many curves and wriggles, occupied and blocked up the centre of the room. A heavy-looking ormolu gas chandelier hung above it, with curves and wriggles to match. The paper was white and gold, with a sparse and stingy-looking pattern, which contributed its share to the prevailing coldness of the general effect. A family portrait and a couple of water-colours represented pictorial art; a few never-opened volumes of Tupper and Longfellow, interspersed with the "Illustrated Birthday Gift," did duty for literature upon the meaningless centre-table. Two flower-bespangled porcelain vases, the ceramic treasures of the establishment, flanked the mantelpiece. Worse than all, a covering of chintz above the blue satin on chairs and sofas, removed only on Christmas-day or marriage festivities, but allowed to remain *in situ* even on Sunday afternoon, openly proclaimed the strict artificiality of the drawing-room. "Let no one venture to be at his ease," the whole

Digitized by Google

place cried out with all its mutely blatant mouths, "for this is not a common room in which one may dare to be comfortable, but a serious-minded and respectable English drawing-room."

It must be allowed that only in the darkest regions of Philistia, in the very Gaths and Askelons of Great Britain, could drawing-rooms quite as dreary as these be found; and there they may still be found by the dozen. But even in comparatively cultivated families the same general type might be traced, though in a less virulent form. The members of the household used the room freely, and made themselves as happy as they consistently could on the rectangular sofa and the straight-backed chairs; but the general arrangement of the furniture remained the same, and the whitey-gold paper vied as elsewhere with the massive ormolu mirror-frame above the white marble mantelpiece. The table still occupied the central place of honour, while the great chandelier still hung above it with its corona of white-globed lights. In short, in spite of minor differences, the drawing-room archetype was preserved in Brompton and South Kensington, as the vertebrate archetype is preserved alike in the fish, the bird, or the mammal.

If we inquire historically into the evolution of drawing-rooms, the reason for this general unity of design will become apparent. Mr. Darwin tells us that birds and reptiles have corresponding limbs because they are descended from a common ancestor. So, it seems, almost all drawing-rooms have certain features alike, because they are derived from a common predecessor, the aboriginal living-room. In this primitive and undifferentiated stage of combined dining and drawing-room, which may still be found in most of our cottages and farmhouses, the table for the family meals stands in the centre, while the chairs and couches are set with their backs against the wall. From such an original type all the other varieties of reception-rooms have been evolved by slow degrees.

The dining-room, of course, adheres most closely to the primitive form. The centre of the room is the most convenient station for the table; and the chairs, when not actually in use, may stand against the wall as well as anywhere else. The sideboard is but a slight deviation from the ancestral dresser, while the other furniture is useful rather to fill up space than to subserve any special object. But the drawing-room, while varying in several minor particulars, still foolishly adheres with slavish fidelity to many features of the original living-room. The table, rounded or cut into an oval, and twisted as to its legs out of all recognition, remains irrationally in the centre of the room. The overhanging gas chandelier replaces the candle or lamp which in the primitive dining-room naturally stood upon the table itself. All the other pieces of furniture occupy places assigned to them through survival from the elder custom. In fact, the drawing-room is a fair instance of the persistence of type, even after the type has become comparatively useless.

It may be objected to my theory of the origin of drawing-rooms—I do not mean intentionally to parody Mr. Pickwick's famous speculations

Digitized by Google

on the Hampstead Ponds—that the state apartments in our halls and castles, as well as in the town houses of the upper classes, have never conformed to this aboriginal cottage type. But really the line of descent in the two cases is quite distinct. The old mediæval hall, where the baron dined at high-table on the dais, and the retainers sat at the lower board on the sunken floor below, was really and essentially a dining-room, like that of good old farmhouses in our own day. It still survives in the halls of our Oxford and Cambridge colleges. At the Renaissance, however, when Italian mansions took the place of mediæval castles, the travelled nobleman who had seen the palaces of Florence or Genoa brought back many new-fangled notions for his town-house in the fashionable quarter of the Strand, and his country residence at Knowle or Berry Pomeroy. He added to the old dining-hall the modern withdrawing-room, into which he retired after dinner with the ladies of his family. These withdrawing-rooms were furnished from the first on the Italian model, just as Italian terraces were laid out in the garden, and Italian art was imitated on the walls. It was an Italianising age, when Spenser modulated his stanza on Tuscan standards, and Shakespeare laid the scenes of his dramas at Verona or Venice. From such a beginning all our upper-class Belgravian drawing-rooms have taken their form; and nobody can fail to recognise in their furniture, even at this day, many traits of the original Italian spirit, though somewhat obscured by later French innovations of the Louis Quinze epoch.

Now, whence did the Italians get their early palaces? Certainly by descent from the great Roman halls and villas. And these were not framed at all upon our northern model, but were developments from the very ancient primitive Helleno-Italian house. They were based upon the open roof, the dark inner apartments, and the great smoke-blackened cieling of the common dining-room. The Roman atrium never looked in the least like our own drawing-rooms, because the original Roman dinner was served on small movable tables. In the earliest times, when the family lived entirely in the atrium, the only permanent furniture which it contained consisted of a few stools and benches, together with the movable brazier on the central hearth. At a later date, when meals were taken in a separate apartment, the atrium became a real reception room; but its decorations were mainly confined to the mosaic pavement, the marble pillars, the frescoed walls, and the few simple though shapely stools or tripods for the guests. Thus the later Italian hall in the palaces of Genoa or Florence, derived from this original type, never resembled our solid-looking English drawing-rooms, but was rather conspicuous for the lightness, not to say the meagreness, of its upholstery. It depended more for its effect upon frescoed cielings, parquetry or mosaic floors, and walls covered by acres of painted canvas, than upon the "superior marble-covered consoles" or the "elegant rosewood centre-tables" of our own British household furnishers. This wide difference of origin sufficiently explains the difference of appearance between the drawing-rooms of

Digitized by Google

our ancient Elizabethan mansions and those of our modern middle-class villas.

But, to pass on from this too curious question of historical evolution, let us suppose a rational human being, emancipated from the hereditary prejudices of his race, were to bend his mind to the profound task of furnishing and decorating an ordinary simple English drawing-room *de novo*. What would be the principles which must guide him in making the six boundary-walls, including the floor and cieling, together with their contents, as pretty, as comfortable, and as useful as is compatible with the nature of our climate and habits? In other words, how *ought* simple middle-class English people to furnish the room in which they ordinarily live? This is a question which has often been asked of late years, but none of the answers seem to me completely satisfactory. I do not mean that they are too dogmatic, for on the present occasion I mean, with my readers' kind permission, to dogmatise somewhat freely on my own account; but they have all been a trifle too irrational, too ready to take for granted the very points which need demonstration. Suppose, then, we attempt to decide how a reasonable and artistically-minded man would naturally go to work if he wished to set up his own drawing-room upon reasonable and artistic principles.

Following the unexceptionable advice of Mrs. Glasse, he would probably begin by first catching his hare. And here, at the very outset, he would be very likely to meet with a difficulty, seeing that so many drawing-rooms are, from the beginning, badly and irrationally constructed. But we will grant, for argument's sake, that he is lucky enough to meet with an honestly-built room, having sufficient light, air, and breathing-space, together with a sound wooden floor, a sound plaster cieling, and sound unpapered walls. We shall not endow him with anything so magnificent as a carved oak cieling, a handsome wainscot, or an inlaid floor; for these, desirable as they are, cannot come within the reach of the average modest English householder. We must content ourselves with trying our experiment upon an ordinary London cottage of the type which radiates from every main thoroughfare in the great western and south-western district. But, if possible, we shall stipulate for a bay-window in front, which is not too extravagant a request even in a region of exorbitant ground-rents and narrow flattened building-lots. Any suggestion of a curve, or even a diagonal line, must be gratefully welcomed as breaking the dismal monotony of the four square corners.

Having got his room, our imaginary householder's next point will be to arrange for the decoration and management of its framework—the cieling, floor, and walls. This is really by far the most important question in the whole furnishing process; for if you once get your framework properly arranged, the room will look well with any furniture or no furniture at all. Every time you look up, the eye must necessarily fall on one or other of the six boundary walls. On the other hand, no amount of taste and care bestowed upon cabinets, vases, and mirrors will

Digitized by Google

atone for a heavy, ugly paper, a staring carpet, or a cold white cieling covered with a huge radial monstrosity in plaster-of-Paris. Good paintings are beautiful objects for the eye to rest upon, but they will not strike us so much if they stand floating in a sea of pictorial red roses tied together in bunches by festoons of white-and-gold ribbon. Hence the desirability of taking your room unpapered, and, as far as possible, undecorated. For if you find it already papered and painted, the chances are a hundred to one that you will have to pull all the landlord's or previous proprietor's work to pieces, and begin the whole task of decoration afresh.

First of all, then, we must start with the paper; for this will give the general tone to the room, especially as regards its prevailing colours. We can settle nothing as to painting the panels, doors, and window-frames, or as to choosing the carpet and furniture, until we know the background with which they are to harmonise. One of the greatest mistakes committed by people of well-meaning intentions, but insufficient experience, is that of buying this, that, and the other separate article because it is in itself pretty, without reference to the other objects which must form part of the total effect with it. To prevent such inharmonious combinations of severally beautiful shapes and colours, we must needs begin with the universal background—the wall-paper. About this there can now be little hesitation, for good patterns in wall-papers have almost driven the old crude whitey-gold abominations out of the market. What one needs in the framework of one's room is some restful and rich-looking mass of neutral colour, on which the eye may anywhere fall without being distracted by divergent rows and crosses of the pattern. The beautiful deep-tinted modern papers with flowing and interlacing floral designs, suggested by natural forms, but treated, as all decorative work should be treated, conventionally rather than pictorially, supply us with the very framework which we need. We do not want to cover our rooms with some little picture of a bunch of flowers, repeated four hundred and fifty times over, so that wherever we turn we see the same inevitable object staring straight in our faces. Even a very pretty picture—a flower-piece of Dutch fidelity—would pall upon the eye if one had to look at it in four hundred and fifty separate copies about a hundred times a day; but the flower-bunch of the wall-paper, instead of being a miniature by Weenix, is a very coarse wood-engraving from a very inartistic and unfinished sketch. Nor do we want a cold mass of white and pearl-grey to chill us every time we turn our eyes away—Damon from his book, and Phyllis from her crewel-work. We require something which will look rich and warm, at the same time that no one point attracts our eye rather than another. I shall not insist further on this point, however, because it has been often enough insisted on already during the last few years, and those who do not at once prefer the new style to the old will not be converted by any deliberate argument against the evidence of their own eyes. There are people who,

Digitized by Google

when the æsthetic revolution first supplied them with its exquisite patterns, joyfully and thankfully accepted them at first sight; and there are people who voted them "gloomy," and preferred the aboriginal bunch of roses or the ancestral gold-and-white lozenges. Concerning these, as concerning all other matters of taste, the wisdom of centuries has decided, *non est disputandum.*

Having chosen our piecing, then—a graceful pomegranate or Queen Anne pattern, let us say, in subdued tones of blue or green—the next question that arises is this: Shall we have a dado? This is a point on which one should speak with diffidence, for the highest living authority on artistic decoration—the man who has done more than any other to spread æsthetic culture among our middle-class homes—has pronounced most unmistakably against the use of paper dados. He will not design them, print them, or permit them to be sold at his establishment, on the ground that they are base imitations of a genuine polished wooden or solid tile wainscot. Nevertheless, if one may differ from so high an authority—and after all, in matters of taste, each man can but follow his own lights—I cannot see the force of this objection. The paper dado does not pretend to be anything but paper, and it affords an agreeable break in the otherwise monotonous *coup d'œil* from floor to cieling. If, indeed, it were coloured to represent tiles, or marble, or carved oak, the same condemnation might fall upon it as falls on all other deceptions and shams whatsoever; but the paper dado of our own day seldom makes any false pretence of any sort, preferring to be its own simple self rather than to masquerade as Persian tile or inlaid stonework. Such an honest decorative dado, well treated on purely ornamental principles, I humbly venture to believe, does not transgress any rule of good taste or good feeling. We might almost as well object to wall-papers as being spurious imitations of fresco. On the other hand, the man who does not like a dado can do without one with an easy conscience, and need not imagine, like many good people who look with wonder at Mr. Du Maurier's clever "æsthetic" caricatures in *Punch*, that a dado and a Japanese screen are absolutely indispensable elements in the "artistic" drawing-room.

If we elect to have a dado, the next thing to settle is its colour. As a rule, the paper designers attempt to settle this question for us dogmatically behind our backs, by designing a particular dado for each of their patterns. Of course the upholstering decorator—who has passed at a bound from his old unreasoning habit of graining imitation oak and hanging dingy dining-room curtains to his new but equally unreasoning habit of profound acquiescence to artistic authority—will do his best to push the prescribed dado upon you with its corresponding piecing, and you will need a little firmness if you are determined to strike out a path for yourself. The ordinary plan is to design the skirting in the same general lines as those of the paper, and only to introduce variety in the depth of the tone and the diversity of the pattern. But a very rich and

Digitized by Google

striking effect can be produced by making the dado *contrast* rather than harmonise with the wall above it. Thus, if your paper has neutral greens and blues for its prevalent tone, the dado may be in deep chocolate red, almost brown. A flock paper adds to the heavy appearance, and so improves the result; but in this case the dado should only rise a very few feet from the floor, or the room will look gloomy. Such an experiment, however, should be tried very tentatively, for unless the contrast is exactly in the right tones the general effect will not be good. Those who distrust their own judgment will do more wisely in following the mute advice of the original designer, and accepting without question the dado which he has provided for his own paper.

After thus settling the main keynote of colour for his whole background, our imaginary householder might next proceed to paint the woodwork of the doors and windows. Doubtless he will find these already daubed to imitate impossibly coarse-grained and knotty planks of oak. But if he wishes to introduce any harmony into his room, he must go to the expense of scraping off this ugly decoration. I am writing, of course, not for those who can afford to paint their walls and cielings in costly designs, but merely for those humbler people who cannot go beyond paper and whitewash. Even for these, however, a good plain colour on doors and windows is indispensable. The paint should not be shiny but dulled, or, in technical language, "flatted." With such a paper as that hinted at above, the woodwork might be painted in two slightly different tints of neutral green—the framework in a darker and the panels in a lighter shade, each of them corresponding to one of the principal shades in the piecing. If the contrasting dado has been used, then a narrow line of the contrasting hue might run along the moulding of the panels; say, in this case, a dark chocolate red, laid upon the concave bevelled rim which is generally found on ordinary doors. The whole framework of the wall will thus be complete and harmonious in itself.

The cieling—I adopt the etymological spelling advisedly—is the great *crux* of most small middle-class houses. The plasterer has wreaked his utmost upon it, and it usually remains a dire monument of his defacing powers. In the centre stands a large and very heavy radiating star in plaster-of-Paris, technically known as a *rose*, and forming a sort of solidified halo around the point from which hangs the inevitable gas-chandelier. In France these roses, though far from beautiful, are generally less obtrusively monstrous than in England; but our national taste has magnified their dimensions, especially in the matter of thickness, till they look like a ponderous impending mass, ever ready to crush the chandelier below. Then the sides are further decorated by a large and equally heavy cornice or frieze, with deep and much-involved convolutions. These roses and cornices stand more than anything else in the way of all rational and artistic decoration. As they stand they are absolutely hopeless. Fortunately, however, they are by no means fix-

Digitized by Google

tures. Indeed, they are very lightly fastened on, and can be easily removed by the workmen. If we adopt this simple course, we can then proceed to paper the cieling, and for those who cannot afford expensive materials or workmanship this is certainly the best thing to do with it. A good retiring paper, with a small and unobtrusive pattern, will serve admirably for this purpose, and will give an air of great richness to the cieling. A geometrical figure is the safest, but a small running floral design, without any salient point or large single flowers, may be used with good results. In the latter case, however, the dado should be carried very high, say so as to cover two-thirds of the wall, and should be almost as light as the piecing, or else the total effect will be too heavy. There is no need to be puritanical about the colour of the paper on the cieling: it may be somewhat brighter than the wall, and may introduce a few patches of comparatively well-marked blossoms. The eye seldom wanders upwards, and so the cieling does not require such a restful and quiet tone as the four walls, which meet our gaze whichever way we turn. A border should of course divide the cieling-paper from that on the walls, as well as the dado from the piecing. Even the frieze, if it consists of simple lines, may be retained and utilised by washing it with harmonious tints, so as to break the transition between the two surfaces.

Supposing, however, that the removal of the rose appear too serious a step, it is possible to improve the plain whitewashed cieling to some extent by adding a little pink and yellow pigment to the wash, instead of the ordinary pale blue. This takes off somewhat from the coldness and baldness of the pale cieling, by giving it a cream-coloured or *écru* tone. Even the irrepressible rose and frieze improve in appearance under the influence of the richer tint, and look a trifle less hideous than before. Then, as we shall see hereafter that the gaslight in our drawing-room must not depend from the centre of the room, it will be possible partially to hide the peccant rose by hanging up a Japanese parasol from the knob formed by the disused pipe. The bright but usually well-assorted crimson and green in the centre of the parasol, and the dark blue strip of border, make a little mass of warm and brilliant colouring which relieves the otherwise bare expanse of *écru* whitewash. To be sure, our higher artistic authorities would disapprove of the parasol as "meretricious;" but when people can not afford peacock decorations and Oriental tiles, a little bit of pretty bright colour, even on a shilling paper umbrella, is not to be despised in its own way. No addition of cream-colour to the whitewash, however, and no Japanese parasol to hide the rose, will ever make up for the paper on the cieling. Nothing else within the range of economical folks will give the same rich and fully-decorated effect, the same idea of a complete framework for the drawing-room as a whole. Make the best you can of a white or whitish cieling, and it still remains a poor-looking, harsh, barren, inartistic roof to your total picture.

For the floor there is little to be said. The border of distempered

Digitized by Google

boards is now almost universal in well-furnished houses, and it recommends itself by its cleanliness, its convenience, and its look of artistic finish. The carpet must be in some hue which will harmonise with the paper—not with the dado, if the two are in contrast—and it should have a border to match, which gives it a pleasant air of having been planned and fitted to the room, instead of being laid down roughly as though cut out of a piece. The old-fashioned carpet, carried up to the skirting and there stopping short unexpectedly with no more finished termination than a hem, is a fitting accompaniment to the bare cieling, the long unbroken gold-and-white paper, and the grained oak doors; but something more definite and more indicative of thoughtful attention is required to balance the dado, the piecing, and the bright cieling which we have imagined. If the carpet and border be cut in a bay so as to suit the bay window, it will add to the appearance of careful planning.

One point still remains before we go on to the furnishing proper, and that is the mantelpiece. In itself the mantelpiece which you receive from the builder will probably be quite hopeless. If you can afford it, the best plan is undoubtedly to remove it bodily, and to replace it by a pretty, bright, and well-tiled grate, with a fender and irons to match. But if this cannot be managed, the only thing to do is to leave it alone. Crewel-work hangings and other attempts to dress up its white marble nakedness are mere transparent makeshifts, which will never mend the prime fault of construction. Undoubtedly this is a great pity, for the fireplace is the natural focus of the room, towards which every other object should converge, and it ought therefore to be the most elaborate central point in the whole picture. Except during a very few months or even weeks of summer, the fire forms the place towards which we all turn the moment we enter, and towards which our eyes are most often directed as long as we remain in the room. It consequently deserves the greatest amount of pains and attention from the sensible furnisher. Happily, even in small houses, the cold white marble mantelpiece is now rapidly giving way before better and warmer stone jambs and cosy-looking blue tiles; so that our imaginary householder may be lucky enough to find a comfortable hearth already installed in the place of honour.

The principle just laid down that the fireplace forms, as the word itself denotes, the chief focus of the room, must be our polestar in settling the remainder of our task. The old centre-table prevented the possibility of arranging the chairs and couches so that every person could get within the cosy semicircle around the hearth. It made the whole room radiate from that essentially artificial middle point to the neglect of the natural and real centre. Our rational drawing-room must attempt to reverse this system, and to put every seat in the most comfortable and most convenient position.

First of all we must arrange for this focus itself. A good grate, a bright fire, and a fender with a straight rod which will allow of one's

Digitized by Google

putting one's feet up to warm, are of course essential to success. Above the mantelpiece we must have some kind of ornament which will rivet the eye, and so vindicate the claims of the hearth to the central place. A picture is hardly the best ornament, however, for it is too same and unvaried. Still less should we hang a bright gilt-framed mirror to reflect the opposite wall. Perhaps the best solution for people of small means is an unpretentious ebonised *étagère* mirror, portioned out into compartments by a little balustrade, and with three shelves dividing it horizontally for small vases and other knick-knacks. Such an *étagère*, containing a few pieces of Venetian glass, a Vallauris vase or two, a bit of hawthorn pattern porcelain, and a couple of tiny low specimen vases with a bright flower or so and a sprig of maidenhair to liven up the whole, forms an exceedingly pretty centre-piece to the picture. It should be hung sufficiently high to allow of a few ornaments standing below it on the mantelshelf. A still prettier plan, however, for those who have a small collection of treasures in old china or Oriental blue is that of putting a plain wooden ebonised *étagère* to stand upon the mantelshelf itself, with stages rising in a pyramid to within a few feet of the cieling. Such an *étagère*, with some good pieces of porcelain well arranged, gives an air of dignity to the principal focus which cannot be secured by a flat object like a picture or a mirror. It is the best substitute for the costly carved chimney-pieces with which architects adorn wealthy mansions; and, in my humble opinion, it is much more pleasant to look at, because it gives free scope to individual taste and fancy instead of merely reflecting the stereotyped notions of the professional decorator.

Intimately connected with the hearth is the question of lighting. Of course the old central gas chandelier will not at all accord with the hearth-wise arrangement we have given our room. If possible, indeed, gas should be done away with, as a rule, in the drawing-room, because the light of a lamp or a candle is so much less trying to the eyes. With this object in view, we may put two candlesticks on the mantel, and keep a reading lamp on a small table at the side of the couch or easy-chair, so as to be in a convenient position for lighting up books or newspapers. But even where gas has been minimised and practically abolished, it will be well to keep it laid on for occasional use, when a brilliant light is required. For this purpose we may put a gas bracket, with a saucer globe, on each side of the mantelpiece, a little below the *étagère* mirror, so that the position of the light may harmonise with the general arrangement of the furniture. This is decidedly the most pleasant plan for after-dinner conversation, as the family groups itself naturally around the fireplace. Still it labours under the disadvantage of throwing the light forward into the room, so that it must be supplemented by the lamp or candles for reading or cards. A small ebonised circular mirror, with a pair of wrought-brass candle brackets attached, may hang on the centre of the wall opposite the hearth, and should supply sufficient light for the background of a small room. Another pair on the piano ought to

Digitized by Google

fulfil all reasonable needs. As for the gas brackets themselves, they should be as simple and unobtrusive as possible. I once happened to stand in a furniture shop beside a middle-aged lady who was buying a central gaselier for her dining-room. The shopman had just shown her two patterns at the same price, and asked her which she would prefer. "Oh! this one certainly," she answered, pointing to the heaviest and most gilded of the pair, "*it's so much more important-looking for the money.*" The phrase has stuck in my head ever since as the model of what we should avoid in decoration. A plain pair of good straight wrought-brass brackets, which can only be obtained, as a rule, from ecclesiastical metal-work furnishers, will accord far better than anything else with the sort of room we have been imagining. Similarly, plain ebonised curtain poles and rings will stand in place of the heavy gilt cornices of the conventional style.

Having thus arranged the whole framework and fixtures of our room, we have next to consider the arrangement of the furniture. This, however, is comparatively a minor point; for if our room is pretty to look at in its own six boundary surfaces, the things we put into it cannot be so very important. In choosing our furniture, we have but one main principle to remember—that a drawing-room is essentially a place to lounge in. An awful heresy this, no doubt, to the matrons of Philistia, but none the less a guiding principle if our drawing-room is to be of any use or comfort to us whatsoever. We don't want to sit up in high-backed chairs, like Pip of *Great Expectations*, in his "stiffest and most uncomfortable Sunday suit." We want a room where we can take our ease after dinner, read our paper or magazine in peace, and converse with our friends at leisure. So the first grand requisite of every chair or sofa should be that you can sit or lie on it. Ricketty frames, slight cane legs that seem for ever in imminent danger of giving way, stiff-backed chairs that catch the shoulder-blade on their sharpest angles, hard sofas with seats so broad that you cannot lean back without dislocating your spine —these are not fitting furniture for a rational drawing-room. The sensible man will *try* every seat before he buys it, and will accept nothing in which he and his friends cannot be perfectly comfortable. There is a curious notion abroad that "artistic" furniture is very pretty, but very awkward and unpleasant to use. No idea can be more mistaken. Artistic in furniture means well-made and comfortable. The best furnished room is the one in which you can sit or lie most at your ease, and be least troubled or worried by any discordant or disagreeable sight, sound, or feeling.

For this reason I cannot agree with those people who wish to make their rooms into furniture museums of the Early English, Renaissance, or Louis Quinze styles. A museum is a very good thing in its way, but it is not a place in which to take up one's permanent abode. Nobody would like to live in Prince Jérôme Napoleon's Pompeian villa, or in the Alhambra Court at the Crystal Palace. Why, then, should they wish

Digitized by Google

to live in a revived Italian or Elizabethan mansion, or even, for the matter of that, in a Queen Anne manor-house? If some of our ancestors liked stiff-backed sofas, why should we, their descendants, endanger the stability of our vertebral columns by literally as well as metaphorically sitting in their places? If our great-grandfathers preferred uneasy leather seats, why should we, their great-grandchildren, discard our comfortable French springs or horsehair stuffing? I am myself an indifferent good Darwinian, but I do not therefore feel compelled to dwell in a cave, like my troglodyte predecessors, nor to use a flint knife for carving a leg of mutton, like my palæolithic progenitors. Though certain æsthetic revivalists may be ascetically virtuous, there is no reason for supposing that there shall be no more cakes and ale.

Accordingly, if you like a particular chair or table, I do not see why you should be deterred from using it by an upholsterer who assures you that it will not "go historically" with the rest of your furniture. You may be eclectic in your taste if you choose. This is the free nineteenth century, and if the eighteenth or the seventeenth produced anything worthy of imitation, there is no reason why you should not adopt it. Of course, if you begin the museum style, you must continue it. A single Renaissance chair in the midst of the Pompeian villa would naturally look ridiculous. But if you have chosen no special style, and are content that your room should simply represent the Victorian period, there can be no objection to a bit of Queen Anne or any other age that strikes your fancy. A surviving chair of your ancestors will come into your drawing-room just as well as a Chaucer or a Petrarch comes into your library.

The best chairs and couches, then, are those which you like best, and which best conform to the natural contour of the human figure in repose. A couch should allow of the feet being put up, if necessary, and should be of such a shape that you can lie upon it, either full length or half length, with perfect comfort. To be really serviceable, it should not be covered with pale blue satin or maize-coloured tabouret, but with a good tapestry covering in a neutral hue, say sage-green or dark rusty red, to wear well. The tapestry should not be too fine to lie down upon, or even, in the privacy of family life, to lay one's feet upon. And the whole couch should, if possible, turn towards the fire, so that its occupant may have his face towards the cheerful glow. At the same time, a little wickerwork table—black and gold if you will—may hold a lamp for reading. As to chairs, a couple of good well-stuffed easy chairs, also covered in the same tapestry, and arranged so as to look towards the fire, ought to be sufficient for luxury, while six or eight little ebonised and cane-bottomed gossip-chairs are the simplest and prettiest "occasional" furniture you can have. The gossip-chair has a curved back which exactly fits the natural curve of the body, and the seat slopes gently downward and backward, so as to give one the best possible support with the least angularity or awkwardness. With these pretty little clean cane

Digitized by Google

seats, a black wickerwork chair, two easy chairs, and a couch, you should have enough places for family and guests in a quiet household.

Tables are of very little real use in a drawing-room; still, we must have one or two to give the whole a furnished look. A spare table near the bay window will allow of a jardinière and a fern or indiarubber plant, to stand in the sun. You can have nothing better than black and gold for this purpose. Another, round of course, is needed for afternoon tea. There must be some place to lay books and other heavy articles; and the table for this office should be solid and should stand against the wall. Nothing remains but the piano; and that must naturally be placed where the exigencies of space demand.

Few articles of furniture are more difficult to manage than the coal-scuttle. It is always getting in everybody's way, and it can hardly be made presentable even by the utmost pains of the struggling decorative imagination. It is almost lamentable to think of all the useless efforts lavished by the human intellect upon abortive coal-scuttles. Perhaps the best solution of the problem is that which combines scuttle and what-not in one comprehensive whole, having a box for the coal beneath, and a couple of shelves for knick-knacks above. This composite piece of furniture may then stand against the wall beside the chimney-piece, where it adds to the general prettiness of the room, instead of being an unsightly encumbrance. Moreover, the weight of the coal gives stability to the what-not, and prevents it from having that topple-down air so common with its kind. Any such suggestion of imminent catastrophes should always be avoided in a drawing-room. We should feel that we can turn whichever way we like without danger of knocking over a Chinese teapot or a vase in oriental jade. For this reason it is well to have no ornaments laid about in the room itself. The *étagère* over the mantel-shelf will hold a few such pretty things; and a Japanese cabinet, out of harm's way behind the sofa, may display a few more; but we should never make our living-room into a sort of domestic *succursale* to the South Kensington Museum. If we must have old Chelsea and plaques of Limoges ware, we may fasten them against the wall or put them up on little brackets; but we should leave ourselves space enough to move unrestrainedly through the midst of our room. Too little furniture is far better than too much; and nothing can be more uncomfortable than the sense of constraint which one feels in some gilt drawing-rooms of the old school, where little top-heavy tables or what-nots are ready to tumble over at every turn of one's coat-tails, and bring down with them a miscellaneous collection of Dresden shepherdesses, glass paper-weights, porcelain flower-vases, Tunbridge-ware boxes, lava slippers, and Swiss châlets in wooden wafer-work.

As to books and pictures I can say little. Even if you have a separate room as a library, at least one small bookcase and a few stray volumes on the table ought to find a place in every drawing-room. They suggest literature and refinement, as the piano and the pictures suggest

Digitized by Google

æsthetic culture. The dreariest of all the dreary blanks in the Philistine home is that betokened by the "Birthday Book" and the "Elegant Extracts" on the drawing-room centre-table of our well-to-do mercantile classes. They belong, with the chess-board History of England and the publications of the Useful Knowledge Society, to Charles Lamb's class of Biblia Abiblia—books that are no books at all. No human being ever yet seriously dreamt of reading them. On the other hand, I can remember to this day seeing many years ago, in a little Canadian log-house, a Dante and a copy of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*—many weeks out of date—lying carelessly on a side-table; and in a moment the log-house became irradiated with an Italian halo by the knowledge that a cultured lady had strayed somehow into that tiny islet of Lake Ontario. Of course, you cannot lay on literary taste by ordering books, like successful Australian sheep-farmers, by the square yard; but you can give an outward expression to the feeling of the house, for good or for evil, by choosing between the *Epic of Hades* and the *Proverbial Philosophy*, between *Daniel Deronda* and *Lady Audley's Secret*, to stand before the face of men upon your drawing-room table. About pictures I shall keep discreet silence. For a room such as that here sketched out, oil-paintings in heavy gilt frames are too ambitious, and water-colours with white margins are perhaps a little out of keeping. So probably the best thing you can do is to confine yourself to good engravings or good autotypes of good pictures. These you can frame in simple black or wooden frames; and their absence of bright colour will prevent them from clashing with your paper or vases. Everything beyond this must be left, like Mr. Weller's orthography, to the taste and fancy of the speller.

To sum up the philosophy of drawing-rooms, as I have endeavoured to set it forth briefly in this paper:—a drawing-room ought to be emphatically a living-room, a place reasonably fitted for moments of relaxation after the work and worry of the day is over. Its framework should consist of restful colours and beautiful designs, so that wherever the eye falls it may be gratified without being wearied or over-stimulated. Its chairs should be meant for the human body to sit in comfortably and naturally, without being cramped, confined, or chafed. Its sofas should be similarly designed for the human body to lie upon, without being doubled up into a physiologically indistinguishable mass. Its tables should hold such things as are useful for the main purpose of a drawing-room, and not such things as merely incommode and bother the inmates. Its hearth should be placed where every one can see the fire, and its seats should be so arranged that they may all look in that direction. Its lights should occupy the best places for lighting the room as a whole, and the books, papers, or music in particular. Its purely ornamental objects should be set where they can be best and most effectively seen, while they are in no danger of being broken, and form no obstruction to one's freedom of movement. And, finally, it should contain such external evidences of culture and refinement as may give it an air not merely of

Digitized by Google

material comfort, but of æsthetic and literary interest. In such a room as this, one may sit at moments of leisure, and feel a positive though quiet delight in the mere act of looking around one. The picture is in itself a beautiful one, and, like every other thing of beauty, is a joy for ever. And, lest any reader should fancy that a room like that which we have imagined is beyond the reach of humble purses, it may be added that every one may gaze on such a picture himself for no greater outlay than one hundred pounds. That is not a penny more than is ordinarily spent upon the gilt-and-white paper and blue satin chairs of the commonplace eight-roomed London cottage. Beautiful carpets, wall-papers, and curtains now cost no more than ugly ones; and only the taste, not the money, is wanting to day wherever we find inartistic or uncomfortable homes.

G. A.

Digitized by Google

research as though he had been going to write a [illegible] propose a remedy. To a man of his intensity and singleness, there is no question but that this survey was melancholy in the extreme. His dis-

Digitized by Google

satisfaction is proved by the eagerness with which he threw himself into the cause of reform, and what would have discouraged another braced Yoshida for his task. As he professed the theory of arms, it was firstly the defences of Japan that occupied his mind. The external feebleness of that country was then illustrated by the manners of overriding barbarians, and the visits of big barbarian war ships: she was a country beleaguered. Thus the patriotism of Yoshida took a form which may be said to have defeated itself: he had it upon him to keep out these all-powerful foreigners, whom it is now one of his chief merits to have helped to introduce; but a man who follows his own virtuous heart will be always found in the end to have been fighting for the best. One thing leads naturally to another in an awakened mind, and that with an upward progress from effect to cause. The power and knowledge of these foreigners were things inseparable; by envying them their military strength, Yoshida came to envy them their culture; from the desire to equal them in the first, sprung his desire to share with them in the second; and thus he is found treating in the same book of a new scheme to strengthen the defences of Rioto and upon the establishment, in the same city, of a university of foreign teachers. He hoped, perhaps, to get the good of other lands without their evil; to enable Japan to profit by the knowledge of the barbarians, and still keep her inviolate with her own arts and virtues. But whatever was the precise nature of his hope, the means by which it was to be accomplished were both difficult and obvious. Some one with eyes and understanding must break through the official cordon, escape into the new world, and study this other civilisation on the spot. And who could be better suited for the business? It was not without danger, but he was without fear. It needed preparation and insight; and what had he done since he was a child but prepare himself with the best culture of Japan, and acquire in his excursions the power and habit of observing?

He was but twenty-two, and already all this was clear in his mind, when news reached Choshu that Commodore Perry was lying near to Yeddo. Here, then, was the patriot's opportunity. Among the Samurai of Choshu, and in particular among the counsellors of the Daimio, his general culture, his views which the enlightened were eager to accept, and above all the prophetic charm, the radiant persuasion of the man, had gained him many and sincere disciples. He had thus a strong influence at the provincial court; and so he obtained leave to quit the district, and, by way of a pretext, a privilege to follow his profession in Yeddo. Thither he hurried, and arrived in time to be too late: Perry had weighed anchor, and his sails had vanished from the waters of Japan. But Yoshida, having put his hand to the plough, was not the man to go back; he had entered upon this business and, please God, he would carry it through; and so he gave up his professional career and remained in Yeddo to be at hand against the next opportunity. By this behaviour he put himself into an attitude towards his superior, the Daimio of Choshu, which I cannot thoroughly explain. Certainly, he became a

Digitized by Google

Ronyin, a broken man, a feudal outlaw; certainly, he was liable to be arrested if he set foot upon his native province; yet I am cautioned that "he did not really break his allegiance," but only so far separated himself as that the prince could no longer be held accountable for his late vassal's conduct. There is some nicety of feudal custom here that escapes my comprehension.

In Yeddo, with this nondescript political status, and cut off from any means of livelihood, he was joyfully supported by those who sympathised with his design. One was Sákuma-Shozan, hereditary retainer of one of the Shogun's councillors, and from him he got more than money or than money's worth. A steady, respectable man, with an eye to the world's opinion, Sákuma was one of those who, if they cannot do great deeds in their own person, have yet an ardour of admiration for those who can, that recommends them to the gratitude of history. They aid and abet greatness more, perhaps, than we imagine. One thinks of them in connection with Nicodemus, who visited Our Lord by night. And Sákuma was in a position to help Yoshida more practically than by simple countenance; for he could read Dutch, and was eager to communicate what he knew.

While the young Ronyin thus lay studying in Yeddo, news came of a Russian ship at Nangasaki. No time was to be lost. Sákuma contributed "a long copy of encouraging verses;" and off set Yoshida on foot for Nangasaki. His way lay through his own province of Choshu; but, as the high road to the south lay apart from the capital, he was able to avoid arrest. He supported himself, like a *trouvère*, by his proficiency in verse. He carried his works along with him, to serve as an introduction. When he reached a town he would inquire for the house of any one celebrated for swordsmanship, or poetry, or some of the other acknowledged forms of culture; and there, on giving a taste of his skill, he would be received and entertained, and leave behind him, when he went away, a compliment in verse. Thus he travelled through the Middle Ages on his voyage of discovery into the nineteenth century. When he reached Nangasaki, he was once more too late. The Russians were gone. But he made a profit on his journey in spite of fate, and stayed awhile to pick up scraps of knowledge from the Dutch interpreters—a low class of men, but one that had opportunities; and then, still full of purpose, returned to Yeddo on foot, as he had come.

It was not only his youth and courage that supported him under these successive disappointments, but the continual affluence of new disciples. The man had the tenacity of a Bruce or a Columbus, with a pliability that was all his own. He did not fight for what the world would call success; but for "the wages of going on." Check him off in a dozen directions, he would find another outlet and break forth. He missed one vessel after another, and the main work still halted; but so long as he had a single Japanese to enlighten and prepare for the better future, he could still feel that he was working for Japan. Now, he had scarce returned from Nangasaki, when he was sought out by a new in-

Digitized by Google

quirer, the most promising of all. This was a common soldier, of the Hemming class, a dyer by birth, who had heard vaguely * of Yoshida's movements, and had become filled with wonder as to their design. This was a far different inquirer from Sákuma-Shozan, or the counsellors of the Daimio of Choshu. This was no two-sworded gentleman; but the common stuff of the country, born in low traditions and unimproved by books; and yet that influence, that radiant persuasion that never failed Yoshida in any circumstance of his short life, enchanted, enthralled, and converted the common soldier, as it had done already with the elegant and learned. The man instantly burned up into a true enthusiasm; his mind had been only waiting for a teacher; he grasped in a moment the profit of these new ideas; he, too, would go to foreign, outlandish parts, and bring back the knowledge that was to strengthen and renew Japan; and in the meantime, that he might be the better prepared, Yoshida set himself to teach, and he to learn, the Chinese literature. It is an episode most honourable to Yoshida, and yet more honourable still to the soldier, and to the capacity and virtue of the common people of Japan.

And now, at length, Commodore Perry returned to Simoda. Friends crowded round Yoshida with help, counsels, and encouragement. One presented him with a great sword, three feet long and very heavy, which, in the exultation of the hour, he swore to carry throughout all his wanderings, and to bring back—a far travelled weapon—to Japan. A long letter was prepared in Chinese for the American officers; it was revised and corrected by Sákuma, and signed by Yoshida, under the name of Urinaki-Manji, and by the soldier under that of Ichigi-Koda. Yoshida had supplied himself with a profusion of materials for writing; his dress was literally stuffed with paper which was to come back again enriched with his observations, and make a great and happy kingdom of Japan. Thus equipped, this pair of emigrants set forward on foot from Yeddo, and reached Simoda about nightfall. At no period within history can travel have presented to any European creature the same face of awe and terror as to these courageous Japanese. The descent of Ulysses into hell is a parallel more near the case than the boldest expedition in the Polar circles. For their act was unprecedented; it was criminal; and it was to take them beyond the pale of humanity into a land of devils. It is not to be wondered at if they were thrilled by the thought of their unusual situation; and perhaps the soldier gave utterance to the sentiment of both when he sang, "in Chinese singing" (so that we see he had already profited by his lessons), these two appropriate verses:

> We do not know where we are to sleep to-night,
> In a thousand miles of desert where we can see no human smoke.

---

* Yoshida, when on his way to Nangasaki, met the soldier and talked with him by the roadside; they then parted, but the soldier was so much struck by the words he heard, that on Yoshida's return he sought him out and declared his intention of devoting his life to the good cause. I venture, in the absence of the writer, to insert this correction, having been present when the story was told by Mr. Masaki.—F. J.

Digitized by Google

In a little temple, hard by the seashore, they lay down to repose; sleep overtook them as they lay; and when they awoke, "the east was already white" for their last morning in Japan. They seized a fisherman's boat and rowed out—Perry lying far to sea because of the two tides. Their very manner of boarding was significant of determination; for they had no sooner caught hold upon the ship, than they kicked away their boat to make return impossible. And now you would have thought that all was over. But the Commodore was already in treaty with the Shogun's Government; it was one of the stipulations that no Japanese was to be aided in escaping from Japan; and Yoshida and his followers were handed over as prisoners to the authorities at Simoda. That night, he who had been to explore the secrets of the barbarian, slept, if he might sleep at all, in a cell too short for lying down at full length, and too low for standing upright. There are some disappointments too great for commentary.

Sákuma, implicated by his handwriting, was sent into his own province in confinement, from which he was soon released. Yoshida and the soldier suffered a long and miserable period of captivity, and the latter, indeed, died, while yet in prison, of a skin disease. But such a spirit as that of Yoshida-Torajiro is not easily made or kept a captive; and that which cannot be broken by misfortune, you shall seek in vain to confine in a bastille. He was indefatigably active, writing reports to government and treatises for dissemination. These latter were contraband; and yet he found no difficulty in their distribution, for he always had the jailor on his side. It was in vain that they kept changing him from one prison to another; Government by that plan only hastened the spread of new ideas; for Yoshida had only to arrive to make a convert. Thus, though he himself has laid by the heels, he confirmed and extended his party in the State.

At last, after many lesser transferences, he was given over from the prisons of the Shogun to those of his own superior, the Daimio of Choshu. I conceive it possible that he may then have served out his time for the attempt to leave Japan, and was now resigned to the provincial government on a lesser count, as a Ronyin or feudal rebel. But, however that may be, the change was of great importance to Yoshida; for by the influence of his admirers in the Daimio's council, he was allowed the privilege, underhand, of dwelling in his own house. And there, as well to keep up communication with his fellow-reformers as to pursue his work of education, he received boys to teach. It must not be supposed that he was free; he was too marked a man for that; he was probably assigned to some small circle, and lived, as we should say, under police surveillance; but to him, who had done so much from under lock and key, this would seem a large and profitable liberty.

It was at this period that Mr. Masaki was brought into personal contact with Yoshida; and hence, through the eyes of a boy of thirteen, we get one good look at the character and habits of the hero. He was ugly and laughably disfigured with the small-pox; and while nature

Digitized by Google

had been so niggardly with him from the first, his personal habits were even sluttish. His clothes were wretched; when he ate, or washed, he wiped his hands upon his sleeves; and, as his hair was not tied more than once in the two months, it was often disgusting to behold. With such a picture, it is easy to believe that he never married. A good teacher, gentle in act, although violent and abusive in speech, his lessons were apt to go over the heads of his scholars, and to leave them gaping, or more often laughing. Such was his passion for study, that he even grudged himself natural repose; and when he grew drowsy over his books, he would, if it was summer, put mosquitoes up his sleeve; and, if it was winter, take off his shoes and run barefoot on the snow. His handwriting was exceptionally villanous; poet though he was, he had no taste for what was elegant; and in a country where to write beautifully was not the mark of a scrivener but an admired accomplishment for gentlemen, he suffered his letters to be jolted out of him by the press of matter and the heat of his convictions. He would not tolerate even the appearance of a bribe; for bribery lay at the root of much that was evil in Japan, as well as in countries nearer home; and once when a merchant brought him his son to educate, and added, as was customary,* a little private sweetener, Yoshida dashed the money in the giver's face, and launched into such an outbreak of indignation as made the matter public in the school. He was still, when Masaki knew him, much weakened by his hardships in prison; and the presentation sword, three feet long, was too heavy for him to wear without distress; yet he would always gird it on when he went to dig in his garden. That is a touch which qualifies the man. A weaker nature would have shrunk from the sight of what only commemorated a failure. But he was of Thoreau's mind, that if you can "make your failure tragical by correctness, it will not differ from success." He could look back without confusion to his enthusiastic promise. If events had been contrary, and he found himself unable to carry out that purpose—well, there was but the more reason to be brave and constant in another; if he could not carry the sword into barbarian lands, it should at least be witness to a life spent entirely for Japan.

This is the sight we have of him, as he appeared to schoolboys, but not related in the schoolboy spirit. A man so careless of the graces must be out of court with boys and women. And, indeed, as we have all been more or less to school, it will astonish no one that Yoshida was regarded by his scholars as a laughing-stock. The schoolboy has a keen sense of humour. Heroes he learns to understand and to admire in books; but he is not forward to recognise the heroic under the traits of any contemporary man, and least of all in a brawling, dirty, and eccentric teacher. But as the years went by, and the scholars of Yoshida continued in vain to look around them for the abstractly perfect, and

* I understood that the merchant was endeavouring surreptitiously to obtain for his son instruction to which he was not entitled.—F. J.

Digitized by Google

began more and more to understand the drift of his instructions, they learned to look back upon their comic schoolmaster as upon the noblest of mankind.

The last act of this brief and full existence was already near at hand. Some of his work was done; for already there had been Dutch teachers admitted into Nangasaki, and the country at large was keen for the new learning. But though the renaissance had begun, it was impeded and dangerously threatened by the power of the Shogun. His minister—the same who was afterwards assassinated in the snow and in the very midst of his body-guard—not only held back pupils from going to the Dutchmen, but by spies and detectives, by imprisonment and death, kept thinning out of Japan the most intelligent and active spirits. It is the old story of a power upon its last legs—learning to the bastille, and courage to the block; when there are none left but sheep and donkeys, the State will have been saved. But a man must not think to cope with a revolution; nor a minister, however fortified with guards, to hold in check a country that had given birth to such men as Yoshida and his soldier-follower. The violence of the ministerial Tarquin only served to direct attention to the illegality of his master's rule; and people began to turn their allegiance from Yeddo and the Shogun to the long-forgotten Mikado in his seclusion at Rioto. At this juncture, whether in consequence or not, the relations between these two rulers became strained; and the Shogun's minister set forth for Rioto to put another affront upon the rightful sovereign. The circumstance was well fitted to precipitate events. It was a piece of religion to defend the Mikado; it was a plain piece of political righteousness to oppose a tyrannical and bloody usurpation. To Yoshida the moment for action seemed to have arrived. He was himself still confined in Choshu. Nothing was free but his intelligence; but with that he sharpened a sword for the Shogun's minister. A party of his followers were to waylay the tyrant at a village on the Yeddo and Rioto road, present him with a petition, and put him to the sword. But Yoshida and his friends were closely observed; and the too great expedition of two of the conspirators, a boy of eighteen and his brother, wakened the suspicion of the authorities, and led to a full discovery of the plot and the arrest of all who were concerned.

In Yeddo, to which he was taken, Yoshida was thrown again into a strict confinement. But he was not left destitute of sympathy in this last hour of trial. In the next cell lay one Kusákahé, a reformer from the southern highlands of Satzuma. They were in prison for different plots indeed, but for the same intention; they shared the same beliefs and the same aspirations for Japan; many and long were the conversations they held through the prison wall, and dear was the sympathy that soon united them. It fell first to the lot of Kusákahé to pass before the judges; and when sentence had been pronounced he was led towards the place of death below Yoshida's window. To turn the head would have been to implicate his fellow-prisoner; but he threw him a look from

Digitized by Google

his eye, and bade him farewell in a loud voice, with these two Chinese verses :—

> It is better to be a crystal and be broken,
> Than to remain perfect like a tile upon the housetop.

So Kusákahé, from the highlands of Satzuma, passed out of the theatre of this world. His death was like an antique worthy's.

A little after, and Yoshida too must appear before the court. His last scene was of a piece with his career, and fitly crowned it. He seized on the opportunity of a public audience, confessed and gloried in his design, and, reading his auditors a lesson in the history of their country, told at length the illegality of the Shogun's power and the crimes by which its exercise was sullied. So, having said his say for once, he was led forth and executed, thirty-one years old.

A military engineer, a bold traveller (at least in wish), a poet, a patriot, a schoolmaster, a friend to learning, a martyr to reform—there are not many men, dying at seventy, who have served their country in such various characters. He was not only wise and provident in thought, but surely one of the fieriest of heroes in execution. It is hard to say which is most remarkable—his capacity for command, which subdued his very jailors; his hot, unflagging zeal; or his stubborn superiority to defeat. He failed in each particular enterprise that he attempted; and yet we have only to look at his country to see how complete has been his general success. His friends and pupils made the majority of leaders in that final revolution now some twelve years old; and many of them are, or were until the other day, high placed among the rulers of Japan. And when we see all round us these brisk intelligent students, with their strange foreign air, we should never forget how Yoshida marched afoot from Choshu to Yeddo, and from Yeddo to Nangasaki, and from Nangasaki back again to Yeddo; how he boarded the American ship, his dress stuffed with writing material; nor how he languished in prison, and finally gave his death, as he had formerly given all his life and strength and leisure, to gain for his native land that very benefit which she now enjoys so largely. It is better to be Yoshida and perish, than to be only Sákuma and yet save the hide. Kusákahé, of Satzuma, has said the word: it is better to be a crystal and be broken.

I must add a word; for I hope the reader will not fail to perceive that this is as much the story of a heroic people as that of a heroic man. It is not enough to remember Yoshida; we must not forget the common soldier, nor Kusákahé, nor the boy of eighteen, Nomura, of Choshu, whose eagerness betrayed the plot. It is exhilarating to have lived in the same days with these great-hearted gentlemen. Only a few miles from us, to speak by the proportion of the universe, while I was droning over my lessons, Yoshida was goading himself to be wakeful with the stings of the mosquito; and while you were grudging a penny income tax, Kusákahé was stepping to death with a noble sentence on his lips.

R. L. S.

Digitized by Google

Love the Betrayer.

Lo! in a dream Love came to me and cried,
"The summer dawn creeps over land and sea,
The golden fields are ripe for harvest-tide,
And the grape-gatherers climb the mountain side;
The harvest joy is come, I wait for thee,
Arise, come down, and follow, follow me."

And I arose, went down, and followed him;
The reaper's song came ringing through the air,
Below, the morning mists grew pale and dim,
And on the mountain ridge the sun's bright rim
Rose swiftly, and the glorious dawn was there.
I followed, followed Love, I knew not where.

Through orange groves and orchard ways we went,
The cool fresh dew lay deep on grass and tree,
Above our heads the laden boughs were bent
With weight of ripening fruit; the faint sweet scent
Of fragrant myrtles drifted up to me:
Blindly, O Love, blindly I followed thee!

O Love, the morning shadows passed away
From off the broad fair fields of waving wheat;
I followed thee, till in the full noon day
The weary women in the vineyards lay;
The tall field flowers drooped fading in the heat;
I followed thee with bruised and bleeding feet.

Upon the long white road the fierce sun shone,
And on the distant town and wide waste plain,
O Love, I blindly, blindly followed on,
Nor knew how sharp the way my feet had gone;
Nor knew I aught of shame or loss or pain,
Nor knew I all my labour was in vain.

Digitized by Google

The sun sank down in silence o'er the land,
    The heavy shadows gathered deep and black;
Across the lonely waste of reeds and sand
I followed Love; I could not touch his hand,
    Nor see his hidden face, nor turn me back,
    Nor find again the far-off mountain track.

Blindly, O Love, blindly I followed thee:
    The summer night lay on the silent plain,
And on the sleeping city and the sea;
The sound of rippling waves came up to me.
    O Love, the dawn drew near; far off again
    The grey light gathered where the night had lain.

On through the quiet street Love passed and cried,
    "The summer dawn creeps over land and sea;
Sweet is the summer and the harvest-tide;
Awake, arise, Love waits for thee his Bride."
    And she arose and followed, followed thee,
    O traitor Love! who hast forsaken me.

U. A. T.

Digitized by Google

Farmers and Farms.

The great farming class and the gentlemen of the guild of literature, who cultivate respectively the soil and the intellect, have at least one distinguishing characteristic in common. There are few other callings that embrace so wide a range of ranks and pretensions. The poet who is the glory of his generation; the philosopher who may be the polestar of generations to come; or the historian who is making his memory immortal by the successive editions of his monumental work, is scarcely further removed from the penny-a-liner, with his sensational police reports and appalling conflagrations, than the capitalist renting his twelve or fifteen hundred acres from the crofter who clubs with his neighbour for a horse, and toils harder than the overtasked animal to keep himself and his family off the parish. Naturally that gentleman farmer stands more punctiliously on his dignity as an "esquire," that he feels himself on ambiguous terms with the squires on the manors in his neighbourhood, many of whom may envy the balance at his banker's, even in these evil days of general depression. His residence is conspicuous for its substantial comfort, but there is a decided dash of ostentation as well. The entrance gates are resplendent in the freshest of paint, and he prides himself on the trimness of the short gravel drive that sweeps round to the "hall-door" through the miniature shrubbery of evergreens. He has everything apparently that the heart of the country gentleman need desire, from a greenhouse and a grand piano to the smart servant in lustrous tops, who folds his arms in serene self-satisfaction on the back seat of the teak-built dogcart. Yet, whatever may be the master's innermost social aspirations, he cannot take his stand behind the line that should divide him from his humbler neighbours. He must seem to mix on terms of frank equality with millers, maltsters, corn-factors, and the smaller fry of farmers; he must buy and sell and get gain somehow, if he is to turn the profits that pay for his luxuries. He must exchange a ready grip of the hand or smile at a cordial punch in the ribs from the horny-fisted grazier who is guiltless of gloves, unless in the shape of fingerless mittens, in the depth of the winter. In the market-place or at the ordinary at the "King's Head," he must be hail-fellow-well-met with Sluggins, who is always a term or two behind with his rent, and with Rasper, whose farming is as rough as his talk. No wonder that our gentlemanly and well-educated friend, who may have been at Cambridge as well as the Agricultural College at Cirencester, finds the company of "his class" uncongenial; while his wife and daughters can hardly be said to give themselves airs, if they are barely on visiting terms with Mrs.

Digitized by Google

Rasper and Mrs. Sluggins. The one set of ladies pass their days in a drawing-room, with their books and music, flowers, and water-colour sketches; while the others are at home among the saucepans and milk-pails, in a kitchen whose roof is festooned with flitches, and to which the labourers, warm from their work, have the *entrée* on terms of equality.

The widening distance between men of the same occupation is significant of the changes that have been taking place in the last two or three generations. A farmer who means to make money must never be above his business; but then seventy or eighty years ago, no farmer seemed to be above his business. The very richest of the class were something more than simple in their habits; and if they were in the habit of drinking hard like their betters, they spent little in show and nothing on refinements. Even in Scotland, the country of the parish schoolmaster *par excellence*, they set small store by book-learning. We can hardly get a better notion of what they were then, than by looking at some wonderfully life-like specimens which we know to have been painted after nature, by the most brilliant yet realistic of novelists. Dandie Dinmont and Martin Poyser are a pair of companion and nearly contemporary sketches from the opposite sides of the Border; for Mr. Poyser flourished in the days of the Prince Regent, as we gather from a passing allusion to His Royal Highness's habit of high play. The sturdy Scotch borderer was in every sense a man of substance. When "the woo was up" he could offer his friend Brown the advance of a hundred or two to buy a step of promotion, remarking very sagely that the profits of the clip were "too muckle to ware upon sugar and brandy." And when Pleydell suggested that he should add to his holdings, in place of squandering his savings upon law pleas, he did not deny that he possessed the wherewithal, but objected that "the Duke" was not fond of led farms. Yet Dinmont, though shrewd enough, did not stand as to his habits much higher in the social scale than the shepherds he employed on his own grazings, or those Bewcastle horse-coupers he fought with at the fairs. His wants were few as his tastes were simple, though such as they were he satisfied them liberally. He went well mounted and well clothed; he lived in rough and monotonous plenty; he drank far more strong drink than would have been good for him had it not been for an iron constitution invigorated by exercise and the bracing air of Liddesdale; and he had time to spare for the wild sports he delighted in, from drawing the badgers to "leistering" the salmon.

Dandie Dinmont was a borderer, and flourished, as Dominie Sampson remarked, by his cunning in flocks and herds. So far as we know, he may have had to buy the oats for Dumple, and may never have broken up a patch of corn-land on the green knowes and haughs of Charlieshope. But the lowland agriculturists of Scotland, in his time, were as primitive and unfastidious, though scarcely so well off. The farms, or at least the rentals, were small, for the land was generally poor and in great part unreclaimed. Nowhere has the combination of skill, capital, and enter-

Digitized by Google

prise worked such wonders in the way of raising the value of property. Heather wastes have been broken up; peat bogs and marshes have been turned into corn-fields; drain-pipes have everywhere been sunk by the million, till the snipe and the wild duck, who used to be nearly as common in the season as fieldfares, have gradually been banished from their favourite haunts. And the elevation in the farmer's habits of life has kept pace with those improvements, and with the tendency to increase the extent of the farms. We can conceive what his quarters were in Dinmont's time by what men who are not much past middle age can remember. Even where there were several pairs of strong-work horses in the stables, and where the stack-yard showed in imposing proportions behind the rows of byres that were well filled in the winter, the house was out of all keeping with the outbuildings. Often, indeed, it was more like a hovel to the southern eye, with its low doorways, and narrow windows, and bulging roof of thatch secured by pegs and straw ropes. There might be a straggling border of old-fashioned flowers in the "kail-yard," that did duty for an ornamental garden—the flowers were there chiefly for the use of the bees, or to supply nosegays for the old lady of the house, as anti-soporifics through the heavy ministrations of the Sabbath—while all that was to be seen in the way of timber were some hardy ashes with a great hedge of "bourtree" bushes.

Yet in one point of domestic economy the Scotch asserted a superiority over their English contemporaries. Above the humbler class of crofters, they generally occupied a living-room, where the family took its meals apart from the servants. In England the old-fashioned farming folk ate, worked, and did their gossiping in the kitchen. They had no secrets from the labourers who worked for them, who seated themselves at the same board below the salt, and who drew their stools into the glow of the great chimney corner to doze or chat, when the day's work was done. The arrangement was convenient in every way. The farmer could talk to his men on the subjects nearest to his heart and indeed the only subjects he cared to converse about—as to how the land was to be sown, or the chances of securing the hay satisfactorily, or the prices the wheat ought to fetch on the next market-day; while the mistress could keep an eye on her maids over their tasks of spinning and knitting. Fancy the feelings of the emotional Mrs. Poyser, had she been forced to keep herself to herself in a parlour, as she gradually "worritted" them to high agony pitch, at the thought of the scandals and the mischief going forward out of sight. What had once been the dining-room at the Hall Farm was not kept in order for state occasions. The furnishing consisted of fleeces of wool, stacked away in a corner, and a heap of empty corn-bags in the middle of the floor. But who can forget the picture of the kitchen; the reflection of that hearty, hard-working life of plenty and contentment which is perhaps the nearest modern approach to the poet's ideas of the golden age? There could hardly fail to be an impression of comfort and cheerfulness from the lustre and exquisite polish of

Digitized by Google

everything, from the ancient oak table, turned up like a screen, in which Hetty stole glances at her own pretty features, and the hobs of the grate, which shone like jasper; to the face of the good-humoured master of the house, and the rosy cheeks of the hard-worked servant-wenches. That patriarchal system of life in common had its advantages as well as its charms. Men and maidens might put up with a great deal in the way of rough speeches which, as they knew, meant very little, when they were treated on a footing of easy equality. It flattered the vague sentiments of self-respect which lie latent somewhere in the bosom of the English boor, as they have been developed by Rousseaus and revolutions and universal suffrage in the peasants and artisans of La Belle France. And the rich abundance they were admitted to share must have come home to the feelings of Mrs. Poyser's domestics. When Molly went to the cellar for the amber-coloured ale, she drew the jugfuls for the labourers at the lower end of the table, from the identical barrel that served her master. And as for the *menu* of the supper, so liberally dispensed—the cold veal and the stuffed chine, the fresh lettuces and the potato salad—associating it with a long afternoon in the fields, after a half-past twelve o'clock dinner, it makes one's mouth water to think of it.

Poyser was one of the principal tenants on a fine property. Mrs. Poyser was a woman in a thousand, and her home and housekeeping were exceptionally comfortable. But theirs was the life led by the generality of the substantial farmers of the time. Turning from realistic novels to descriptive prose, no one gives a better idea of the farmer's feelings and habits than William Howitt in his *Rural England*. Howitt had been brought up from boyhood in the country. In the course of his *Visits to Remarkable Places*, and to the *Homes and Haunts of the Poets*, he had travelled almost every county in England. No man had a keener eye for country matters, or a better knowledge of the inhabitants of our hamlets and homesteads. And he paints them to the life with a touch of envy, though, for himself, he was too highly cultivated and intellectual to enter so heartily as he might have desired into their material enjoyments. He represents the farmer as going occasionally through hard times, and being squeezed by the pressure of falling prices. But, on the whole, the victim of temporary misfortune had the faith of experience in the averages of the seasons. It is an ill wind that blows good to nothing or nobody; and the rain that keeps the grain from ripening must be beneficial to the grass and the root crops. Then the healthy labour in the open air, with the sound sleep after wholesome weariness, ought to keep the mind equably balanced. The fairly prosperous agriculturist should have no knowledge of nerves, or of the exaggerated and perpetual anxieties that make the misery of so many gentlemen of culture. Immunity from these must be worth much to every man, and might well compensate for some restriction in intellectual pleasures. "Take things easy and grow fat," we assume to be an axiom; and it follows logically that when a man grows fat, there must be an

Digitized by Google

obvious presumption that the world goes easily with him. We are all familiar with the farmer as the typical John Bull of comic art—bluff and broad-shouldered, in top boots a trifle too tight, and with the strong coat seams strained almost to bursting across the ample chest. His forehead may run into wrinkles now and then as he scratches his head over an ugly bill, or has his attention called to some misdemeanour of his servants. But he knows that his credit is as sound as his constitution, while that nothing is to be gained by cherishing his worries, and so digestion waits on unfailing appetite.

And that magnificent physique, though running decidedly to corpulence, was never maintained on any meagre diet. He had no notion of stinting for the sake of saving, like the Frenchman who notoriously nourished himself on frogs, or the Spaniard whom he had scarcely heard of before Lord Wellington's campaigns. How he would have "scunnered" —to borrow an expression of the Ettrick Shepherd—at the idea of breaking his fast on black bread and acid wine; or of dining in German fashion on the bread eked out by sauer kraut and sausages; or even at the more savoury Castilian *olla*, with shreds of bacon stewed through the beans! We have seen how he fed in ordinary at snug homesteads like the Hall Farm; and Howitt, in his racy style, gives a Gargantuan picture of his convivialities. Setting aside the meetings at the ordinary of a market-day, and the "modest cheerers" that wetted the bargains, the convivialities of course were few and far between; or, rather, they came crowded together at particular seasons, when the work was slack and the masters at leisure. Then the well-to-do farmers of a neighbourhood indulged themselves in a round of mutual entertainment. Invitations sent about by word of mouth were sure to be promptly and satisfactorily responded to. The mighty preparations remind one of the superabundance of Camancho's wedding, except that the English feasting was by no means phenomenal. Sheep were slaughtered, and sirloins laid in for the great day of the feast; poultry of all kinds had their necks wrung by the half dozen; the oven was in full blast, baking pies and all manner of pastry; while the mistress of the house taxed her skill to the uttermost over creams, and syllabubs, and special rustic delicacies. And the guests did all honour to the preparations; and if they civilly strained a point, at the entreaties of their hosts, the effort came pleasantly and harmlessly to them. They were urged to come early, and they came early. The snack between ten and eleven, 'to stay the stomach after the drive,' consisted of some promiscuous trifling with hams and tongues and huge cottage loaves. It merely served to whet their appetites for the dinner, which was on the table at the stroke of one; and then they naturally delivered the main assault, when turkeys, and geese, and pigeon pies came in merely as unconsidered *entrées*. A substantial tea followed in due course; and that was succeeded by a heavy supper, planned on the same scale as the dinner. The beverages were strong home-brewed and spirits. Mr. Poyser would have turned up his nose at sherry which Dinmont would

Digitized by Google

have condemned as 'shilpit' drink; and the cost of the entertainment was moderate enough, putting the quantity consumed out of the question. That ponderous joviality implied a great deal. What admirable digestions our worthy friends must have had; and what placid existences they must have led to preserve these digestions unimpaired! As a rule, they could count on their heads as on their stomachs. They might have cut the corners rather sharp, and perhaps had an occasional upset, as they rattled homewards along lanes where the ruts and ditches were overshadowed by thick masses of foliage. But we may depend on it that they were seldom troubled by nightmares; and if the doctor who joined in the festivities had a summons from one of his *convives* the next morning, he was more likely to be called in as surgeon than physician.

They lived in the reasonable gratification of their desires, without being greatly troubled with the cares of riches. Farming was not altogether what Mrs. Poyser painted it, when she wished to disenchant Arthur Donnithorne of his fancy of coming to settle at the Hall Farm—"putting money into your pocket wi' your right hand, and fetching it out wi' your left." But those who practised it were content to get along from year to year, with something in hand after the rent was paid. They had no faith in the safety of anything but the land, or the county banker. They had no ticklish "securities" fluctuating in the vicissitudes of financial affairs, and they cared little for wars or rumours of wars, except in so far as these affected corn and cattle. As often as not, in remoter districts, the best part of their spare capital was kept floating in a capacious leather pocket-book, or invested in the bottom of a drawer or on the top shelf of a cupboard. At best the good man's ambition was to lay by some modest portion against his daughter's marriage, or to scrape a sum together to start a son in his own way of life. Farming in those days was managed cheaply. The fields were manured from the farm; the fencing and ditching were of the roughest; the waggons were built by the village wheelwright at his leisure; the blacksmith undertook the ordinary repairs, and could turn out a ploughshare or harrow-teeth with anybody. The landlord gave a trifle for repairing now and then, but he had no notion of squandering his money on "permanent improvements;" and he would assuredly have declined in most forcible language had he been asked to put his hand in his pocket for drain-pipes, or to give a tenant an order for some waggon-loads of lime.

On the other hand, he and his tenantry lived, generally speaking, on excellent terms. The tenants were slow to move, and had settled down into circular grooves, like the horses that went the rounds in their own threshing machines. Old families in every sense of the word, in which stalwart men married fruitful wives, many of them had lived on the land for generations. The elders had celebrated the squire's birth, when the hogshead of old ale was broached on the lawn; and they had assisted at many a merry-making under the roof-tree of the mansion-house. They looked on the landlord as their natural friend; firmly believed in

Digitized by Google

an identity of interests; and showed him a feudal loyalty which was partly sentimental and partly instinctive. When it came to mustering forces for a battle on the hustings, the landlords counted the votes they could command by the heads of their tenants. The lord of the manor in the one parish might be a Whig, and his neighbour in the next a true blue Tory; but the farmers who mounted the yellow or blue had no sense of sacrificing their independence of opinion. Then there was seldom any grievance on the question of the game. There was generally a fair head of pheasants and partridges looked after by a keeper, with an assistant or two, according to the extent of the estate; and if the hares might occasionally be somewhat in excess, preserving for bloody battues had nowhere come into fashion. In some places the shooting arrangements were so amicable that the farmer might easily obtain leave to take a turn round his fields with the gun, or even offer a day's sport to a friend; while on the downs of the southern counties, or in the dales of the north, not a few of the tenants kept their greyhounds; and others, who did a little horse-breeding, seldom failed to show at the nearer meets, or were regular in their attendance on the squire's harriers.

Talking of field-sports reminds us of the old-fashioned yeoman-farmer, a race not yet altogether extinct. You may still come here and there on one of the old homesteads, where little has been changed for the last hundred and fifty years. It is situated somewhere aside from railways, perhaps in the dales of Derbyshire or Yorkshire, or very likely near some secluded village on the Downs. We said that little had been changed for a century and a half, but the chances are that it was built long before that. The date in old English figures is inscribed conspicuously over the door or on one of the projecting gables, and may carry one back to the Civil Wars. The house is of stone or weather-stained brick, according as it is situated in the north or south. In the former case it is somewhat grim of aspect; in the latter it is more attractively picturesque, since the material lends itself more easily to the architect's fancies. There is a confusion of short, steep roofs, at a strange variety of angles; there are fantastic gables, and quaint dormer windows, and stacks of chimneys of graceful design. The casements open among curtains of creepers, or perhaps the edifice has almost hidden itself out of sight behind the clinging masses of ivy. And the ivy has covered the great wooden barns, finding its way through the chinks in the tiles and the holes of the knots it has displaced, and covering the rafters within with a cobwebbed tapestry of tendrils. Whenever you do catch sight of the roof, it is gorgeous with stone-crop or orange-tinted lichens. There is an ancient pigeon-house at one side of the straw-yard, where the pigs are grubbing among the turkeys and geese; and the young cattle with a mare and foal are standing up to their hocks in litter. There is no appearance of poverty—quite the reverse, and yet everything seems tending more or less to decay. The material wants of the creatures are most amply attended to, but there is an absence of the graces of fancy farming.

Digitized by Google

The trees coming closely up to the house, and sorely in need of thinning, give cover to troops of jackdaws and starlings, who watch the young broods of chickens with felonious intent. You feel a longing to hack among the timber, and let in some light and air; the more so that it overshadows a muddy horse-pond, diffusing odours that are anything but fragrant. It is a relief to wander down the brick-paved walk, and turn aside through the wicket-gate into the garden, where you find yourself walking between high yew hedges, among the sunflowers, and hollyhocks, and arbours of honeysuckle.

The master of the place is much what you might expect. A tall old gentleman, well preserved, rather stiff though somewhat bowed, dressed probably as the sporting dandy of the old school, in a cutaway coat, a blue bird's-eye necktie, tall collar, flat hat, ribbed corduroys, and tight gaiters. A sportsman he was bred, not to say born; for his father and grandfather before him used to be famed for their sporting dogs and their fighting-cocks. Though he has served churchwarden to his parish, and his hand and kitchen are open to charity, he laments the effeminate degeneracy of the age that condemns the cock-pit and prosecutes for badger-baiting. But he still shows you some of the old breed of game fowl, and prides himself on the setters in his kennel, while detesting battues as he does the total abstinence movement. He goes to bed genially mellow most evenings of his life, and in consequence of these regular habits, as he says, he can shoot as steadily as ever. And the property he farms is a paradise for all sorts of wild creatures. He keeps down the rabbits for obvious reasons, and takes care that the hares do not come to too great a head, for, though given to the sports of the field, he has regard to his crops and the main chance. But there is cover of all kinds for bird and beast in what we may call the tame picturesqueness of a hilly English county. He seldom trims a hedgerow, and never grubs a copse; and there are deep, dark pools among alders and sedges, and rivulets trickling under canopies of leaves, beloved by the singing-birds that breed in swarms, and where you may often come on a duck or a woodcock. Hale as he is, it cannot be very long before the old gentleman is gathered to his fathers, and then the place will see melancholy changes. Though he does not care to change the destination, the thought of its future is pain and bitterness to him. His heir, whether he occupies or lets the farm, has long resolved that far more must be made of it. Copses will be cleared away; the hedges that straggle in wild luxuriance will be trimmed like the hind-quarters of a French poodle; the old irregular fields, running into odd nooks and angles, will give place to great rectangular enclosures; the courses of the brooks will be straightened; the black pools will be drained, and the pollard willows and alders cut up by the roots. The birds must accept the notice of ejection, and even the sparrows that used to fly up in clouds about the homestead will be forced to go with the rest. For the venerable buildings with the lichen-covered roofs will be razed and replaced by a smart

Digitized by Google

new farmsteading; and the house itself, transmogrified by builders and bricklayers, will look like a withered harridan rejuvenated by paint and violet powder. That at least is the kind of transformation which has been going on everywhere of late years, and is certain to make still more general progress under the growing pressure on impoverished landlords.

It was about the time when our old friend was a boy that British farming took a fresh start. "Peace, Reform, and Retrenchment" were to become the watchwords of a political party with whom he never had any sort of sympathy, and all three were to be forced upon him and his neighbours sorely against the grain. The Peace, that came as a blessing to war-wearied Europe, pressed hardly alike on English landowners and their tenants. The famine prices of grain had collapsed—it had been selling in the first year of the century at 120 shillings the quarter—and the prices of cattle fell in proportion, when the ports of the grazing countries on the North Sea were opened again. The agitation and alarm were as great as they have been in the past year, and Reform and Retrenchment became matters of necessity. But the landed interest was still "protected," so that it had an ample margin to come and go upon, and every encouragement for judicious expenditure. The shrewd Scotch people, secured by their long leases, took the lead in the movement. They went in for deep subsoil-draining. They took pains to improve their breeds of cattle. As a necessary consequence, valuable animals had to be suitably housed, for lung diseases and similar complaints were serious matters in herds predisposed to them by high feeding. And when the stock was made comfortable in clean litter in spacious stalls, it followed of course that their masters' accommodation should be bettered. When the richer proprietors set the example of liberality others had to follow suit, and substantial slated houses of two stories sprung up all over the counties where the land repaid intelligent cultivation. The wilder and more barren districts for long remained comparatively backward; yet even there the lairds began to find out that nothing paid better than judicious reclamation. Of ready money as a rule they had little or none; but enactments of the Legislature offered them new facilities for borrowing on their prospects by "heritable bond." Of course the landowners took all possible precautions to see that their tenants made the most of the borrowed money; and covenants of leases as to rotation of cropping, &c., were drawn up more strictly after the best authorities and rigorously enforced under heavy penalties. The very poverty of the Scotch soil and the inclemency of the climate tended towards the perfection of high farming by calling the energy and intelligence of the agriculturist into action.

Shorter leases and more favourable climatic conditions made the southern agriculturists take things more easily. Even in England, the farther north one goes, as a rule, the more conspicuous are the signs of capital and intelligence. There are farms in Lincolnshire and the Yorkshire Ridings, still more perhaps in Durham and Northumberland,

Digitized by Google

as highly cultivated as any in the Lothians or in the Carse of Gowrie—the most fertile district of Perthshire. And a farm liberally and scientifically managed is a very pretty sight in its own way. One remembers the *naïve* admiration expressed by Lenny Fairfield, in *My Novel*, when Richard Avenel showed him his farming conducted on the money-getting system of the United States. Poet in embryo, as Leonard was, the young rustic, brought up in the back settlements of Hazeldean, had a shrewd appreciation of the beauties of the profitable, and burst out with, "This is farming, indeed!" Yet Dick Avenel, though he had straightened his fences and felled his hedgerow timber, could have had no prescience of the impending revolution in agriculture or of the inventions that are become the commonplaces of tillage. We doubt if the guano deposits of the Chincha Islands had been discovered then; and we are sure that researches in artificial manures had hardly gone beyond the preliminary experiments. All the heavy work on the farm was done by horses, and the most skilful firms of agricultural implement makers contented themselves with improving on the ideas of their fathers. Now the farmer feeds his land almost as highly as his prize cattle. The fresh country air is often unpleasantly odoriferous with the too fragrant contents of the brown manure sacks delivered by the truck-load at the nearest railway station. The rustic lanes are not only cut up by the heavy waggons, but grooved by the more ponderous wheels of the traction engines. Go where you will, from morn to dewy eve, you may listen to a monotonous drone in the distance like the hum of the swarming of brobdingnagian humble bees. It is the engine at work, where a pair of Messrs. Fowler's steam-ploughs are tearing beautifully straight furrows in the stiff fallow; or threshing by steam is going on near the stackyard, in the yellow haze of floating clouds of the straw-dust. Steam power and complicated machinery necessitate the employment of skilled labour, which must be paid proportionately. Then the outbuildings are the most substantial of their kind, with every modern improvement in the way of drainage and ventilation. And all that involves a great outlay of capital, which renders returns in some respects more of a certainty, but in other respects makes farming a great industrial speculation. On a long average of seasons one may be pretty sure of a remunerative yield; but in the meantime fluctuations in prices may mean prosperity or insolvency. The old-fashioned farmer, sitting at an easy rent, who went about his work in his slovenly fashion, cared little for anybody but his landlord or his banker. They knew him, and were willing to give him time if he were backward with his rent or repayments on advances. But the capitalist has to turn the interest quickly on very large sums of money; and must meet heavy outgoings in all directions before he can strike the balance of net profits. Besides the expenditure for weekly labour, he has been running long bills all over England—with shipping agents at the seaports; with implement makers at Grantham or Ipswich; with hirers of steam machinery; with manufacturers, and chemical

Digitized by Google

analysts. With most of these, the terms are cash on delivery; or he must be mulcted in an important percentage if he persuades them to deal on credit. A sudden droop in the price of wheat or stock makes the difference between a loss and a profit; and the loss of his interest on the sums he has at stake soon runs to an embarrassing reserve of debt. In buoyant times the county bankers are ready enough to accommodate a regular customer. They and he make sure that things will come round, and that some fat years will counterbalance the misfortunes of a lean one. In the meantime his temporary straits are kept a close secret. If he can at all manage it, he must be punctual with his rent; for credit to a capitalist of his class is almost as important as it is to a City financier. For the same reason, he is reluctant to retrench in domestic expenses, and it would be suicidal to cut down the outlay on his farm and starve the goose that lays the golden eggs. But if permanent causes of depreciation are at work, as has lately been the case, the millstone that hangs round his neck grows heavier. The provincial bankers finding the money-market tighten on them, and that the majority of their customers are being simultaneously pinched, civilly decline further advances. Our farming friend is driven to his wit's end, and, possibly, to force sales of his produce—a proceeding which is one of the shortest cuts to ruin. The bankers, who make a point of having information as to their client's affairs, get wind of what is going forward, and become urgent for his "contracting his liabilities." Next come the bills of sale and foreclosures, leading on to bankruptcy, to be followed by farms thrown on the market, and remaining in the meantime on the hands of the proprietor.

We are aware, of course, that there is another side to the question. Some of the men who have the best means of knowing, and who point triumphantly to their own experience and balance sheets, maintain that scientific farming, with liberal, though judicious, outlay is the only way to face foreign competition. We are inclined to think that they are quite right. Our present concern is only to call attention to the fact that the new system causes infinitely greater anxieties than the old one; and that it is the height of absurdity to draw its representative as the comfortable, corpulent John Bull of farming and political caricatures. We should rather sketch him of the keen, quick, nervous Yankee type—a man whose faculties should be ground as sharp as the blades of his own patent reaping machines. In prosperous times he may be as jovial and buoyant as the City man who is floating to fortune on the flood of universal confidence, and who sees all his securities going up in the universal inflation. But when markets are dull and the seasons unkindly, the new farmer is as likely to suffer from broken nights and depressing fits of dyspepsia as anybody who trades in cash or cotton. It is impossible to conceive him the life and soul of the gathering at a festivity like that imagined by Howitt. He is much more likely to be put on a regimen by his doctor, and to have exchanged the brimming tankard of home-

Digitized by Google

brewed for mineral water flavoured with Scotch whisky. Of course we do not mean to imply that he has any monopoly of anxiety under existing circumstances. Agricultural distress has been spreading with melancholy impartiality over the length and breadth of the islands, and on few has it fallen more heavily in their degree than on the smaller tenants in primitive districts. They are blindly wedded to their antiquated ways; they have neither versatility of resource nor fertility of invention, and they have seldom pecuniary resources to fall back upon. But then, consequently, they are beings of a coarser organisation, and less sensitive to the difficulties and cares that are not actually pressing on them at the moment. They have inherited the placid stolidity of temperament that makes them bear the most trying weather with imperturbability; and they are slow to realise the full force of the circumstances that must exercise a permanent influence on their pursuit. While, at least for a time, the stress of their difficulties lights very much on the shoulders of their landlord. They take no especial thought of their credit; on the contrary, when in difficulties they are ready enough to acknowledge them as the obvious way of obtaining relief. They accept an abatement of 15 or 25 per cent. on the rent, and bring excuses in place of the balance on the rent-day. They give their solemn assurance that they cannot pay, and so far there is an end of it. Probably the landlord has reason to believe them; at all events he dislikes proceeding to extremities. They may have been long settled on the property, and decent tenants as tenants go; and it might be far from easy to replace them satisfactorily. As the times get worse the farms begin to go a-begging, which gives the occupant a kind of practical tenant right. Then, while the wealthy farmers have to keep up appearances, the poor tenant can live as he pleases; his habits have always been frugal, and his actual sustenance costs but little. Nobody knows or cares whether he cuts down the butcher's bill or sends away his maid of all-work, and before he introduces domestic reforms he tries stinting the farm. Nothing can, of course, be more suicidal; but a dull brain is generally short-sighted, and he would make answer, besides, to any expostulation, that "needs must when a certain gentleman drives." The cultivation proclaims the lamentable state of his finances, and things go steadily from bad to worse. Under the most favourable circumstances the British farmer seems to consider his ducks more than his family or his health. There is almost invariably such a slimy "horse pond" as we saw near the steading of the substantial yeoman, exhaling pestilential stenches in warm weather. Clearing it out does not fall within the routine of necessary farming labours, and accordingly it is left to breed a plague of frogs and flies. But now that the tenant is economising in labour, it would seem as if that putrefying quagmire had overflowed the approaches to the farm, and you stumble over the knee among treacherous ruts that are hidden under the overflow of mud and surface-water. The tiles are slipping from the roofs of the house and outbuildings; while the rain and snow,

Digitized by Google

as they soak through, are rotting the rafters and floors. The paint is peeling in flakes from the casements, and the broken panes left unrepaired are stuffed with straw and raiment by way of makeshifts. Nobody has time or thought to give to the garden, which is overrun with weeds like that of the sluggard, while the doors of stables and cowsheds swing loose upon their broken hinges. Nothing is more significant of distress and despondency than the appearance of the haystacks and rick-yard, which should be the pride of the farmer's heart. In place of the artistic finish given by skilful hands, from the graceful bulging lines from the pillars beneath to the springing curves of the tent-like covering, they have been huddled up anyhow in careless haste; and indeed the contents were scarcely worth more considerate treatment. For long the very sight of the neglected fields has sent a shudder to the soul of the unfortunate landlord; so much so that he would have avoided the farm in his shooting beats, had not so many of the others been in similar case. Though there was cover enough to assure good bags of partridges in the weeds that spread over the fallows in a tangled jungle, seeding and sowing themselves in increased luxuriance year after year, the scanty wheat crop showed a sad absence of nourishment with a superabundance of water saturating the roots, and the hay that should have been sweet was coarse and ragged. For the ditches were choked, and doubtless the drains as well; or the fences were in a stage of advanced decrepitude, and the gaps in the hedges stopped everywhere by thorn branches. The day's hire of a hedger or ditcher was a matter of consequence, so the stitches were not taken up in time. Though the cattle broke out of their meagre pastures now and then, raiding through the night in the wheat and on the root-crops, still they were pitiably out of condition, and were sold at a loss when sent to the markets.

The day of reckoning is delayed, but it must come at last. The landlord loses patience, and the tenant gradually loses heart and self-respect. The tenant may have always farmed on the slovenly system; yet he knows as well as Martin Poyser that land so foul as his is a scandal to the parish. Now that the ale runs low and thin in his cellar at home, he takes to dropping in at the village public-house, and, after his disheartening bargains of a market day, he drinks a double measure of spirits. His clothes wax shabbier, and he gives up attending the church, where he had once aspired to fill the office of churchwarden. He misses the Sunday gossip in the churchyard; he sees that old acquaintances are shy of him. He feels that it would be a relief to bring the struggle to an end, which he has waged with constitutional and dogged tenacity. His landlord, even if compassion had nothing to do with it, is almost compelled to treat with him on his own terms. Having nothing to give up except the farm, and, being worth neither powder nor shot from the legal and financial point of view, he throws up the farm and moves away. He may have children who can offer him some assistance. Probably he subsides into the condition of a labourer, with a

Digitized by Google

prospect of being ultimately supported by the parish, to which he has been contributing poor-rates for the best part of his life. And the landlord comes into the reversion of the consequences of his incapacity and neglect; and, after nursing the farm at a heavy sacrifice, may hope in a year or two, if he is lucky, to get rid of it at a reduced rent.

We have been drawing sombre pictures; yet they are by no means overcharged with shadow. We have personal knowledge of many cases precisely like those we have been describing; and we could point at this moment to half-a-dozen landlords in the same district who have annexed a full third of their properties to their home farms, and would be happy to transfer on any reasonable terms that might be dictated by any responsible applicant. But it may be expected that the clouds will lift, though we can scarcely hope that they will clear away altogether; and even now there are more favoured parts of the country where there are few visible signs of the blight on the land. A Howitt might have to listen to many complaints in his talks with the rustics he interviewed in his walks; and a Cobbett could find matter for biting invective, and for gloomy forebodings of our agricultural future. But at least the artist may make himself as happy as ever among the farms that adorn and gladden our landscapes. Falling in harmoniously with the surrounding scenery, they offer an infinity of characteristic studies for the brush, and are the very spots to touch the fancy of a poet. It seems a pity that the occupants should be so indifferent to the beauties of their surroundings, and be as unconscious of the æsthetic charms of their existence as if they were weavers in Spitalfields or miners in the Black Country. Were we to take a foreigner on a flying trip of a day or two to show him the fairest spots in the loveliest of the English counties, we hardly know where we should pick and choose in such an embarrassment of attractions. If we made our start from the metropolis, we need not go far afield. A cheap railway fare and a short journey would land one at some station in the wealds of Kent or Sussex. Flat as it appears, in contrast with the hills on either side, the weald that covers what once was forest is in reality broken into nooks and declivities as picturesque as any in the recesses of the Schwartzwald. You dip by a shady lane down a steep pitch from a heath to catch your first glimpse of the chimneys of the farm and the cowls of the oast-house over the tops of the cherry trees in the orchard that skirts the lane. The old house stands half-sheltered by a mighty walnut, that casts its cool shadows over the straw-yard as well. There is a row of hives against the sunny southern gable, and the narrow strip of terraced garden in front is gay with wallflowers, and stocks, and sweet-williams. You go up some steps to the little wicket, and approach the porch by a path set with pebbles. You can distinguish little of the brick façade for the honeysuckles and roses that shade the casements with their tendrils and throw a fragrant drapery round the gables and waterspouts. The place is something like that residence of the yeoman farmer we sketched before, but in a rougher

Digitized by Google

style, and on a smaller scale. The farm must be cultivated under serious difficulties, for every acre of it is hill and dale, except where a strip of verdant meadow winds along the bottom of the valleys. The land seems poor though not unkindly, for these orchards through which you descend on the house are loaded in good years with blossoms and fruit; and the hops spread themselves from pole to pole, intertwining their shoots in rich luxuriance over land as stony as that of a Rhine vineyard, except that here you have flints in place of shale. The cart-tracks twist through a network of hedges; the seldom-frequented footpaths lead to stiles that are almost hidden by the overgrowth of hedge or copse, and at any turn you may come upon some choice "bit" of woodland scenery that would tempt the roving artist to set down his camp-stool. Most characteristic perhaps are the solitary outlying barns, with the great wheat-stack or two standing in the weedy enclosure, and the young cattle with staring coats penned in winter under their lee. How long some of these barns may have stood there, Heaven only knows; for these rough structures of tarred oak planks and tile are wonderfully durable, and they show all the signs of hoar antiquity.

No less romantic, and even richer and softer in their forms of beauty, are the surroundings of the homesteads in the western shires, and notably in the country that stretches through Hereford from the heights of Malvern to the foot of the Welsh hills. It is a land of rain and abundant waters, where the drip of the mild climate forces everything, where farm-houses and villages stand embosomed in the apple orchards that cover the landscape in the spring with a blush of pink—in the autumn with glowing tints of russet. Herefordshire is the English Normandy, while in parts of the Isle of Wight and Southern Hants you have a northerly reflection of the vegetation of the Channel Islands. There are broad-leaved fig-trees nailed to the walls, and great fuchsia-bushes growing in the gardens to the size of flourishing laurels. We might come back to London by way of Berkshire, where the woodland parishes, with their miles of waste ground overgrown with clumps of hawthorn, and the strips of common that run in and out among the wheat-fields, are the favourite resorts of tramps and gipsies. Or we might go among the primitive dwellings in the Peak of Derbyshire, or the massive grey houses, half hall, half cottage, that shelter from the winds under the folds of the hillsides in the upland dales of Yorkshire and Westmoreland. Even the farmsteading of the far north has a decided charm of its own, and is none the less attractive at times, that it is so often depressing or forbidding of aspect. See it on a raw day in March or November, and it strikes you as the abomination of dull desolation. The sad tints of the stone and slates are in grim harmony with the clouds and the landscape. The stream that brawls before the door, and is being fed by scores of tiny torrents, is coming down in a foaming flood of clay-coloured water. You distinguish nothing beyond the immediate foreground for the dense vapours that come down from the hills to meet

Digitized by Google

the fog steaming up from the valley. The sheep are huddled together in utter wretchedness, and you realise the full isolation of the family when you perceive that the ferry-boat has ceased plying and been removed up the bank out of reach of harm. The stepping-stones had, of course, been submerged long before; and the ford, as it shifts with circumstances, is only available through a tract of dry weather.

Naturally you feel some glow of gratitude at the thought that your own lines have been cast in more lively places; and yet if you had paid your visit in summer, your impressions would have been very different. Then you would have delighted in the verdure of the turf lit up by the glorious blaze of the sunshine, and flecked only by the shadows of the fleecy clouds that go floating against the bright blue of the sky. You marvel at the exquisite purity of the atmosphere, that brings each distant rock and stone out in intense relief. Even the hard grey face of the house has put on smiles for the occasion, and the particles of mica in the slates of the roof are sparkling in the light like so many diamonds. Rising against the horizon, behind the green hills in the middle distance, are the bulk and brown saddle-backs of the Cheviots; yet, limpid as the air about you seems to be, their outlines are slightly blurred by a faint fine-weather haze. There is scarcely a shred of wood, except for a patch here and there of stunted fir-trees; but, *en revanche*, there are delicious natural shrubberies of the yellow gorse that cover the broken steeps to the water's edge, and fill the air with their invigorating fragrance. The stream, shrunk back to the bottom of its channel, is breaking gently in white foam-bells against the banks and over the boulders that strew the bottom; the trout are leaping lazily in the pools, and the larks and linnets are singing by the score.

We have loitered with them too long perhaps, but then one is tempted to linger. It is seldom that so many of the senses are exhilarated or intoxicated at once; and, after feasting to the full on the beauties of nature, you feel the agreeable cravings of the bodily appetite. Mellowed as it is by the warm sunshine, the crisp hill air makes you excessively hungry, and the farmer is likely to welcome you hospitably whether you bring him an introduction or present yourself without one. Hearty and hospitable he is by nature; and, moreover, it is seldom he comes across a stranger, except now and then of a market-day at Wooler or Alnwick. His board is spread with an improvised repast, with mutton hams and oatcakes, and cheese and butter, and all the inviting delicacies of his mountains; and he directs special attention to the square bottle of spirits which he holds to be a sovereign specific against the mists. But, bluff and cheerful as he looks and is, the hill farmer has more than his share of anxieties, and no one in the business is more liable to losses. He will shake his head when you praise his sunshine and his views, and tell you with a sudden twinge of the memory that you have never been with him in a winter snow-storm. Waxing confidential in a cloud of tobacco-smoke, you persuade him to renew his griefs. One day the afternoon

Digitized by Google

darkens prematurely, and a fine snow-powder is drifting in the air. The wind sets from the hills in strange currents, rising and falling in fitful gusts. Then the broad snow-flakes take to falling silently; and when he has his last look at the weather before going to bed, nothing—if we may suppose him making a bull—is to be seen but darkness visible. In the morning the snow lies heaped a foot or two above the threshold; already it has been drifting against the banks and eddying in heaps into each nook and corner. The glass has fallen portentously, and keeps falling still, and the signs of a lasting storm are unmistakable. A way has to be cut from the door to the beasts in the yards and outhouses; while there is no getting at the flocks on the open hill pastures, and they must be left to fare for themselves as they can. As the days go on, the farmer grows more and more despondent. Serious losses are certain, and the question is what the percentage of mortality may be. For a time the sheep will have scraped their way to the scanty herbage; soon it is only in wind-driven localities that there is any getting at the shrivelled blades of grass, and these are precisely the exposed situations that the instinct of the animals has taught them to avoid. They cluster together for protection till, lowered by long-protracted inanition, they almost forget the pangs of hunger in the cold, and they have neither strength nor will to shift their quarters, as they are embedded in the warm wrappings of snow. When their master can at last venture out, with shepherds and dogs, like an exploring party of monks from the Great St. Bernard, the quest must be a melancholy one at best, though experience has been preparing him for the worst.

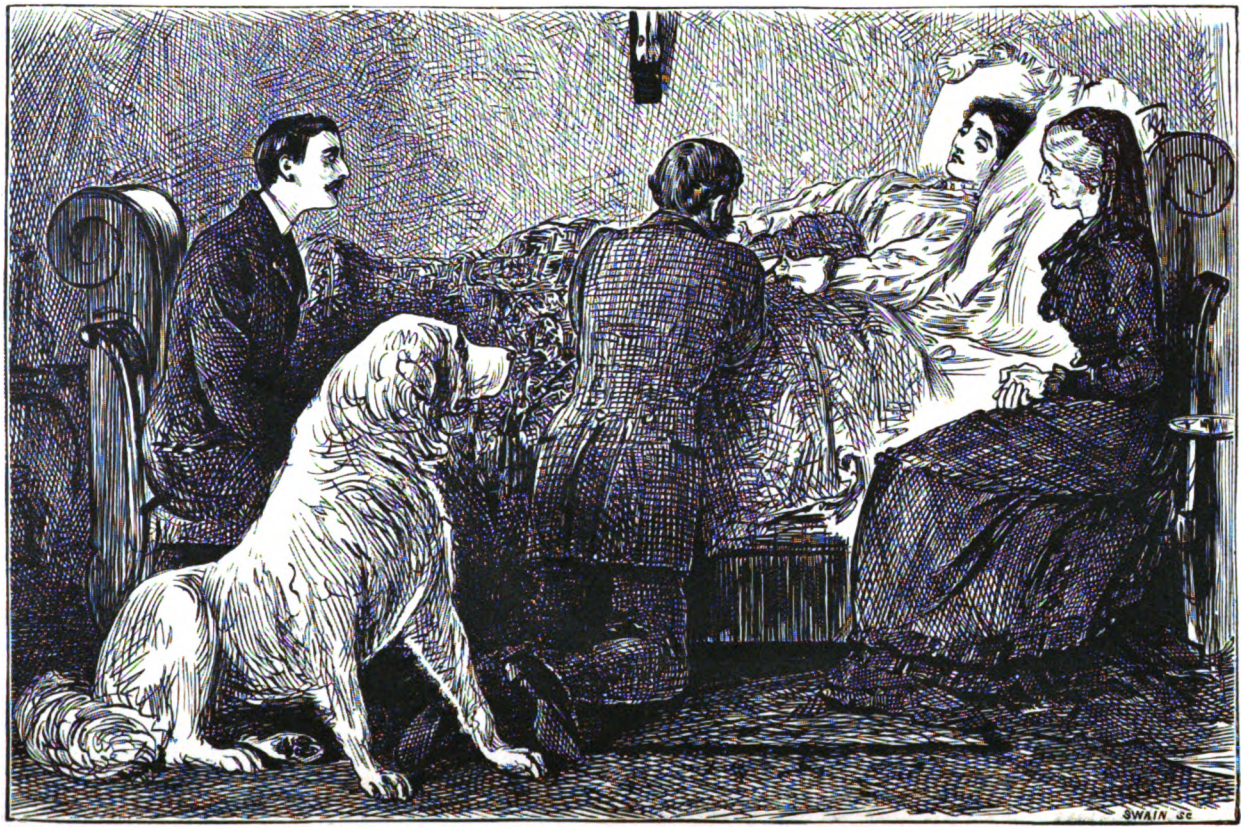
Very different from the rough and ready speculation of the hill farmer is the business of the breeder of fancy-priced stock, though the one investment, like the other, has a large element of hazard in it. A contagious disease may beggar the breeder at any time, as the cattle plague ruined the dairy farmers of Cheshire. The heavy "plunging" in prices has ceased for the time, and perhaps the golden days of the profession are over. It was inevitable that, by diffusing their prolific stock, the breeders should injure their own markets. They have been exporting much of their best blood to the Continent as well as the colonies; and they have to contend besides with the noblemen and gentlemen whose rent-rolls make them comparatively regardless of profits. Five and twenty or thirty years ago it was very different. We well remember the establishment of one shrewd individual of the Quaker persuasion who had the intelligence and enterprise to be among the first in the field. Personally very careful in money matters, he never grudged a long price for blood, when he saw his way to having his cash again with interest. There was always the risk of his losing a valuable purchase; but otherwise what seemed bold speculation was a certainty. In those days he lived remote from railways, and the customers who attended the annual sales of his bull-calves had to travel long distances by coach and carriage. They came all the same in considerable numbers—safe men with

Digitized by Google

cheque-books and well-stuffed pocket-books. The worthy Quaker provided abundant refreshments, but he would never give in to the fashion of stimulating competition with wine and strong liquors. Notwithstanding, the bidding was brisk enough; the prices for exceptional perfection of form ran up the general average; and gentlemen who had travelled so far were loth to go home again from a bootless errand. The excitement of the scene was contagious, even to those who could not altogether sympathise in the enthusiasm. Imagine a ring of connoisseurs in art standing in raptures round an animated Venus de Medici, walked out for their inspection, and to be offered without reserve. The bidder who missed securing one of the stars of the sale consoled himself by the exercise of his private judgment in the purchase of another of superior promise. If he went beyond the figure he had prudently fixed as his limit, he argued that the apparent extravagance must prove wisdom in the end. For a good sire of unexceptionable strain might literally breed fancy prices, as the progenitor of animals unborn who would sweep the prizes at the cattle shows. What encouraged the bidding almost as much as strong spirits could have done was the stroll round the adjacent fields and paddocks. There could hardly be a prettier sight than those groups of sleek shorthorns who had been driven in for inspection and admiration. There were calves kept to be reared on the premises, each attended by a couple of nursing mothers, and light-eyed heifers, as gentle as they were graceful, and yearling bulls that, in spite of being petted and spoiled, looked as if they would use their shooting horns on slight provocation. Sales of the sort have become far more common of late, while every now and then a famous herd comes to the hammer which had been collected regardless of expense by some eminent amateur. But one best gets an idea of the refinements in English stock-raising by a visit to one of the grand cattle shows. The railways have made comparisons possible which were out of the question in the last generation; and polled Angus and Aberdeenshire cattle, with wild West Highlanders, are sent up by the truck-load to the Bristol or Birmingham yards, while the white-faced Herefords and black Berkshire hogs make themselves at home in Perth or Inverness. The shows are so many encyclopædias in life and action of that general advance in the science of the farm on which the farmer of the future must found his hopes. Besides the interminable rows of cattle-stalls, the pens of sheep and pigs, and the coops of poultry of every variety in shape and plumage from Brahmapootras to bantams, you have the latest machinery of all kinds in rest and in motion, from steam-ploughs for work on the steppes down to patent churns and chicken-hatchers. And you feel persuaded that when things have settled down after the present state of transition, the agriculturists of England must make profits as before by the combination of industry, intelligence, and capital, though the incomes of the landlords may be seriously affected.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



AND THERE HER EYES RESTED LONGEST.

Digitized by Google

Mademoiselle de Mersac.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Miss Barrington's Patience is Tried.

MISS BARRINGTON had a small room on the ground floor of her house in Bedford Square, in which she usually spent her mornings, and which was firmly closed against all visitors, save such as came upon matters of business. It was here that she received her lawyer from time to time; it was here that she cross-questioned and browbeat the sturdy beggars, the meek, limp gentlewomen in distress, and the much less patient clergymen who applied to her almost daily for alms; here, too, it was that, when her many occupations allowed her half-an-hour or so of idleness, she was in the habit of enjoying her newspaper or her novel without fear of needless interruption.

She was sitting in this room on the morning after the day of the Windsor expedition, warming her feet before the fire, and reading in the *Times* about the terms of the capitulation of Paris, and the preparations for the election of a National Assembly, when the butler, entering with an apologetic air, announced that Mrs. Ashley was waiting in the hall, and desired an interview.

"Mrs. Ashley!" repeated Miss Barrington, in some surprise. "Well, show her into the drawing-room."

"I beg your pardon, ma'am; but I was to say as Mrs. Ashley wished most particular to see you alone."

"Bother!" muttered Miss Barrington. "Ask her to come in here then," she added aloud.

A rustling of silk skirts was heard from without—a quick, agitated

Digitized by Google

footfall; and then our old friend appeared through the open door, and advanced rapidly towards the fire-place, dropping her umbrella, her veil, and a couple of brown paper parcels on the way.

"My dear Miss Barrington, how are you? I am so ashamed of intruding into your private room in this way! I know you dislike it so very much; and no wonder, I'm sure, having so many business matters, and that kind of thing, to attend to as you have; and I always say that one cannot give one's mind properly to any subject if one is always expecting somebody to come running in and distracting one's attention; and over and over again I have begged Mr. Ashley to let me have one room in the house where, at least, everybody should be obliged to knock before coming in. That would give one a little time, you know; but he won't see the necessity for it, though he has his own study, where he keeps nothing but guns and fishing-rods, and such things, and never, by any chance, opens a book——"

"And what has brought you up to London?" inquired Miss Barrington, perceiving that this speech was likely to be indefinitely prolonged.

"Oh, a multitude of things. Shopping, you know, and—and the dentist. I ought to have had my teeth seen to long ago. And, oh, *could* you recommend me a really good dentist, who is not absolutely extortionate in his charges? Some of them are so shameful—or rather, so shameless! There is a poor man near us at Holmhurst—the curate of the next parish, in fact—a very nice, gentlemanly young fellow, but has lost his teeth early in life—no fault of his, I'm sure—and the other day he had to get a false set; and he thought he would go to one of the so-called cheap men, and——"

"Yes, yes," broke in Miss Barrington, "I know. You told me about him once before. He swallowed the entire set in the middle of the Litany, didn't he?—or something of that kind. Was it to get information from me about a dentist that you came here to-day?"

"N—no; not that alone," answered Mrs. Ashley, beginning to look rather uncomfortable.

"I only asked because, from what the servant said, I fancied you must have some reason for wishing to see me in this room."

"Well, yes, so I have. It isn't exactly what you could call a matter of business, you know; only——"

"Call it anything you like—what's in a name? But let us hear what it is."

"It is about Jeanne. It has been so very kind of you, dear Miss Barrington, to have her here; and seeing London, and the change, and all, must have done her an immensity of good. But everything must have an end, and don't you think she had better go back with me to-morrow?"

"Certainly not. She is quite happy where she is, and I shall not think of letting her go."

Digitized by Google

"Well, but, Miss Barrington," began Mrs. Ashley, hesitatingly, "you see she was placed under my care, and——"

"And you don't think my house a safe place for her to stay in, I suppose. Much obliged to you."

"Oh, Miss Barrington, *please!*" cried poor Mrs. Ashley, with an agonised vision of forfeited legacies rising before her eyes. "You know I could not possibly mean that. Only everybody's house is unsafe at times—at least for particular people; and just now, Jeanne—Mr. Barrington—— Well, she begged me not to mention her name; but really, how is one to help mentioning names? The truth is, I have had a most disagreeable and alarming note from Mrs. Seymour."

"Give it to me," said Miss Barrington, majestically. And, after a moment's hesitation, Mrs. Ashley obeyed.

"Oho! So Amelia takes upon herself to write and tell you that I am encouraging a 'disgraceful flirtation' between your niece and Harry, and that you had better take the girl away, unless you want her to spoil your daughter's prospects. And you have come up to town in order to brandish this silly and impertinent document in my face!"

"Oh, but I didn't do that—I really didn't," pleaded Mrs. Ashley, much alarmed. "You asked me to show it to you, you know; and what could I do? I own I was a good deal put out when it came; but I daresay, after all, there isn't a word of truth in it."

"I don't know why there shouldn't be," returned Miss Barrington, composedly. "That is, as regards the substance of it. I don't admit having encouraged flirtations, or anything of the sort, myself."

"But if that is the case, Miss Barrington—if there really is anything of that kind going on, hadn't I better take Jeanne away at once, before it goes too far to be stopped? Helen's prospects——"

"Helen's prospects don't include a marriage with Harry, I suspect," interrupted Miss Barrington, bluntly. "I am sorry for your disappointment, but it can't be helped. Men will be obstinate, you see. I brought Harry to the water for you; but I couldn't make him drink, could I?"

"Oh, but this is too dreadful! After all that has passed, that our plans should be upset in this way! And by Jeanne, too, of all people, who is engaged herself."

"Ah, that I have nothing to do with. And mind you, I am not going to make myself responsible for any of Harry's vagaries. I don't say that he is going to marry your niece, or even that he is flirting with her; but I think it is only fair to tell you that, to the best of my belief, there is not the remotest chance of his marrying Helen."

"It is very hard!" exclaimed poor Mrs. Ashley, beginning to whimper—"very hard, I must say, after things being all but settled. And that Jeanne, to whom we have tried to show every kindness, should be the one to do us this injury! It does seem hard. I don't want to say anything unkind, but one can't help being reminded of the man in *Æsop's Fables* who warmed the snake in his bosom—so nasty of him!

Digitized by Google

I wonder whether people actually did such things in those days—and it almost tempts one to say one will never trust anybody again. How I am to break this at home Heaven only knows!"

"Come, come," said Miss Barrington, not unkindly, "it isn't worth crying about. Helen is a charming girl, and will make a good marriage yet, you may be sure; and when you come to think of it, Harry is no such very great catch. I have lots of young men among my acquaintances much better off than he; and if you will let me take charge of Helen next season, she shall have her pick of them. Things might be worse, remember. It is not as if she had been in love with Harry."

"Oh, but I am not sure——"

"Now, Mrs. Ashley, you know perfectly well that there never was anything of the kind between them. Helen will be a little mortified and disappointed at first; but I am going to play the part of the fairy godmother, and put everything straight for her in a trice. Take my word for it, the day will come when you will be very thankful to think that our plan fell through."

After this fashion Miss Barrington comforted her visitor, restored her to something like good spirits, and finally, though not without some gentle persuasion, got rid of her.

"That abandoned Amelia!" she muttered, as the door closed behind Mrs. Ashley. "I'll be even with her for this." And then she returned to the Capitulation of Paris.

But Miss Barrington was not to be allowed to inform her mind upon current events that morning. Hardly had she found the place where she had been interrupted in her reading, when another knock at the door announced the approach of a second intruder; and immediately after it, Mr. Seymour shuffled into the room, looking very unhappy and not a little apprehensive.

"Now, before you say another word, Ernest," began Miss Barrington, sternly, "have the goodness to answer me one question. Have you come here to see me of your own accord, or are you sent by Amelia?"

"I should not have thought of disturbing you on my own account," answered Mr. Seymour in a melancholy voice. "I never interfere with other people's affairs; and, besides, I caught a chill yesterday, and I feel that my liver is congested, and that I ought by rights to be in bed. But Amelia wished me to speak to you about——"

"Then you may as well go home again, and go to bed, and nurse your liver; for I don't intend to listen to you."

"Really, Aunt Susan——"

"Really, Ernest, I am not going to stand any more of Amelia's nonsense; and you may tell her so, with my love. If she has anything to say, let her come here and say it; but I won't have her sending me impertinent messages through you."

"But you haven't heard what it is yet."

"I know, though. Bless you, I have had Mrs. Ashley here the

Digitized by Google

whole morning, and only got rid of her by almost thrusting her out of the door.. I don't know what you all expect of me; but I know what some of you will get, if you go on worrying me as you are doing."

And Miss Barrington assumed an air of such ferocity that Mr. Seymour instinctively clutched his hat, and backed away from her.

Upon this, she immediately extended her hand to him.

"Good-bye, Ernest," she said. "Take great care of yourself, and tell Amelia that, any day she likes to come here, I shall be ready for her. Now, I won't detain you any longer."

"And upon my word and honour," said this luckless envoy, giving an account of his mission to Amelia, on his return home, "I believe that, if I had lingered another minute, that aunt of yours would have kicked me out of the house."

If Mr. Seymour could have so far forgotten the delicate state of his health as to open one of the windows of the four-wheeled cab which bore him away from Bedford Square, and to cast a backward glance at the house he had just left, he would have been gratified by the sight of his brother-in-law alighting from a hansom before it.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" said Miss Barrington, gruffly, when this third visitor invaded her sanctum. "And what do *you* want, I wonder?"

"Aunt Susan, I want to have a talk with you. I am in trouble."

"Is it money?" inquired Miss Barrington, blandly.

"No; it isn't money."

"Have you developed an internal complaint?"

"Good heavens, no! I hope not."

"Then, of course, it must be love. Proceed, my dear Harry. I like listening to love tales; and I have no doubt I shall be able to give you a good deal of sound advice as to the best mode of gaining the lady's affections."

"I believe you know all about it," said Barrington, suspiciously.

"No! You don't mean to say that you give me credit for such wonderful penetration as that! Well, perhaps it may save time if I tell you at once that I do know all about it, and so does everybody else. When people make themselves as conspicuous as you and she have chosen to do, they can hardly expect to escape notice. Mrs. Ashley has been here this morning to protest against your conduct. So has Ernest Seymour, acting as representative of Amelia. I only wish the three of you had arrived at the same moment. What fun it would have been!"

"Ah, you may laugh," returned Barrington, in an aggrieved voice, "but it is no laughing matter for me, I can tell you. What a nuisance it is that people won't be content to mind their own business! And what earthly right has Mrs. Ashley to protest against anything I may do? I never heard of anything so coolly impertinent."

"Ah, that's the way of the world. A few months ago you would have allowed that she had some reason for being interested in your pro-

Digitized by Google

ceedings. But we needn't mind poor Mrs. Ashley now. What is it that you want me to do for you? For I presume you want something?"

"I told you what I wanted—only to have a talk with you. I should like to have your opinion about it all."

"What do you wish me to deliver an opinion upon, Harry? Upon the advisability of your marrying Jeanne de Mersac, or upon your chance of succeeding with her?"

"Well, upon both points. I should never have supposed that you would have approved of such a match; but it seems that you do—at least, you have done your best to bring it about—and I wish you would gratify my curiosity by telling me why. I never was more astonished in my life than when I heard that you had asked Mademoiselle de Mersac to stay with you. I always fancied you were bent upon marrying me to Helen Ashley, who, I must confess, would have been a more suitable person from your point of view."

"You don't know much about my point of view, I daresay," observed Miss Barrington. "I have shifted it about a good deal in the course of my life, trying to get face to face with things, and to see them as they are; but I doubt whether I have ever quite succeeded. One can but do one's best. When I was convinced that you really did love this girl, I did not wish you to marry anyone but her. I have always thought that a love-match would be the saving of you. With Helen you would have got on well enough; but you would have been perpetually away from home; and you would have become more and more selfish as you grew older; and then I should have been in constant terror of your falling in love with somebody else, and perhaps running away with her. All I trust is that you will be as true to Jeanne as I am sure she will be to you."

"You need have no fear on that score," answered Barrington, with decision. "I have never loved any one in my life but her; and I shall never love any one else."

"Ah! Well, I suppose you had better go upstairs now, and tell her so. You will find her in the drawing-room."

"Don't be in such a hurry, Aunt Susan. I have told her so already, as it happens; and that is why I am in such trouble and perplexity at this moment."

"Do you mean to say that you have proposed to her, and been refused?"

"Not exactly that; but something very like it. I spoke plainly to her last night, at Windsor, and she wouldn't listen to me. She said that what I asked for was an impossibility—or words to that effect. I never was more taken aback in my life."

"Ha, ha!—so I should imagine. You naturally expected that she would rush into your arms. How disappointing it must have been for you! You can but try again though. Surely it is not in feminine nature to refuse a second offer of your hand and heart."

Digitized by Google

"My dear Aunt Susan, you are perfectly welcome to laugh at me, and I hope you enjoy it. Sneers of that kind won't make me in the least angry, because *il n'y a que la vérité qui blesse*, and I do not happen to be the coxcomb that you try to make me out. I believe that Jeanne de Mersac loves me; and if you choose to think me conceited for so believing, I can't help it. I am not going to waste my breath and your time in proving—as I could, if I chose—that there is no conceit at all in such an assumption. What I want to know, and what I came here to ask you, is whether you will use your influence with her on my behalf. Will you try to make her understand that it is an absurdly mistaken idea of duty that binds her to that Saint-Luc fellow? She will not listen to me, because I cannot pretend to be a disinterested adviser; but if you were to speak, I think it might have some effect upon her."

"And so this was the errand upon which you came, was it?" said Aunt Susan, with an odd look. "No, no, my good friend, you are not quite such a fool as that. What you did come for was to get some one to back up your faint resolution. Don't interrupt me. I believe you love the girl, and you can't help your temperament, I suppose; but I know that, if I had chosen, I could have got you to leave this house this morning without breathing another word to her about marriage."

"Upon my word, this is going rather too far!" exclaimed Barrington, starting to his feet, and showing signs of losing his temper at last. "You have no right to assume that I should behave like a blackguard under any circumstances. I am not one of those people who act upon first impulses, and I daresay I often change my mind; but when once I have pledged myself, I do not go back from my word. I should never have asked Mademoiselle de Mersac to marry me if I had had any thought of backing out of it afterwards; and now, whether I am accepted or refused, I shall always remain true to her."

"Well, well," sighed Miss Barrington, "I hope so, I'm sure. I hope I haven't been making an old fool of myself—but one never knows. If you don't go upstairs now, you will hardly have time to get through what you have to say before the luncheon-bell rings. Please go, and leave me in peace; I want to read my paper."

But Barrington would not go yet. His aunt had not been far wrong in her assertion that his visit to her had been prompted rather by a craving for moral support than for any want of actual help or advice. He wished to be assured that this contemplated marriage would not be looked upon as an act of folly by the world. He wanted to be patted on the back—to be contradicted a little—to have the opportunity of demonstrating that he knew what he was about, and that he loved not only well, but wisely. And Miss Barrington let him have his say, laying down her newspaper again, and hearing him out with great patience to the end.

"What an extraordinary character yours is, Harry!" she exclaimed, at length. "I don't suppose there is another man in the world who

Digitized by Google

would have spent half-an-hour in haranguing an old woman about his undying love, while the object of it was in another room close by, alone, and waiting for him."

Barrington laughed. He was quite himself again by this time, and wondered how he could have felt so uneasy in spirit as he had done earlier in the morning.

"I am going up to the drawing-room now," he said. "I suppose I shall see you again by-and-by."

He opened the door as he spoke, but did not pass through it; for, while he had been talking, yet another visitor had been demanding a private interview with Miss Barrington, and was at this moment announced by the butler.

"Mr. Ashley." It was more than Miss Barrington's patience could stand.

"This was wanting!" she ejaculated audibly. Then she got up, and said, in a resolute voice—

"How are you, Mr. Ashley? Now, please, before you open your statement, permit me to say distinctly and finally that I decline to be badgered in my own den. All the morning through, one person after another has been taking my room by storm, and trying, in every conceivable way, to put me into a rage. Up to this moment I have borne with it all; but to everything there must be an end; and I have never set myself up as a rival to Job. I suppose you know that your wife has been here already?"

"I haven't seen my wife," answered Mr. Ashley. "I have only just arrived from Holmhurst."

And then Miss Barrington perceived that something had gone wrong. Mr. Ashley's naturally loud voice was lowered almost to a whisper; his placid countenance wore an expression of deep solemnity and concern, and his forehead was wrinkled into a portentous frown.

"I don't know what you are talking about," he said. "I want to see Jane; I have some bad news for her. Her brother is dying, I am afraid."

"Good God!" exclaimed Barrington, "you don't mean that."

"Yes; a telegram came for her this morning," replied Mr. Ashley, feeling in his pocket for the paper. I guessed what it might be, and I thought it better to open it than to send it on by post. Here it is, if you like to read it. I wish one of you would break it to the poor girl, I'm such a bad hand at anything of that sort."

Barrington took the telegram, which was from Saint-Luc, and was dated from an hotel in Geneva. "Please come at once. Léon is very ill of fever. There is still hope." That was all; and the words struck Barrington as being needlessly few and curt. He read it aloud, and then said: "Hang the fellow! he might have spent another shilling or two in sending some details."

"Nonsense," returned Miss Barrington; "one can't break things

Digitized by Google

gently by telegram. Go and tell her, Harry, as quickly as you can, and I will look up the trains."

"Hadn't you better do it?" suggested Barrington, who had a horror of painful scenes. "A woman understands better——"

"Very well. Give me the telegram then. And be so good as to ring the bell, and say that I shall want my maid to pack up my things and be ready to start on a journey to-night. I can't let Jeanne go alone. You will find a Foreign Bradshaw somewhere. Just make out the quickest route to Geneva, will you, while I am upstairs."

Barrington obeyed his aunt's instructions mechanically. He rang the bell, and gave the necessary orders to the butler; he got out Bradshaw, and a slip of paper, and jotted down the hours of arrival and departure of the express trains; he listened to the mournful comments and surmises of Mr. Ashley, and by degrees came to a sense of the calamity that had happened, and of what some of its probable consequences would be. He was very sorry for Jeanne, very sorry for Léon, whom he had always liked, and he was also exceedingly sorry for himself. If only he had gone up to the drawing-room ten minutes earlier, instead of remaining to talk sentiment to an unsympathetic listener, how different would have been his position with regard to Jeanne at that moment! Had his offer been accepted, he, too, might have gone to Switzerland with her; but now he felt that if he were allowed to bid her farewell, it would be as much as he could expect of her in this time of her sorrow, and certainly there could be no possibility of his carrying out the purpose which had brought him to Bedford Square that morning. It was very bad luck, he could not help thinking. His heart sank at the idea of parting from Jeanne. He dreaded the long separation that might be in store for them; he dreaded the effect that the loss of her brother might have upon her mind; most of all, he dreaded her return to the companionship of Saint-Luc.

"Nothing more miserably unfortunate could possibly have happened!" he ejaculated aloud, forgetful of the presence of Mr. Ashley, who, however, did not seem to consider the expression too strong a one.

"Yes, yes," he agreed, wagging his head dolefully—"terrible thing—terrible! Poor young fellow! To go through the whole campaign without a scratch, and then get bowled over by fever at the last minute—it does seem hard lines! He was with Bourbaki's army, you know, and, of course, crossed the Swiss frontier the other day, with the rest of them. They seemed to have died like flies, those unlucky beggars!—more from cold than disease though, I fancy. Poor Jane will be dreadfully cut up about this. Very kind of your aunt to propose to take her to Geneva—most kind, I must say. I had been thinking I ought to go myself; but there wouldn't be much use in adding another person to the party now, would there?"

"None whatever, I should say. I would offer to go—to look after

Digitized by Google

my aunt, you know—only I feel convinced that she would not hear of it. There is no difficulty about the journey, and I think when people are in trouble, it is kindest to leave them to themselves as much as possible."

Whether this were meant as a gentle hint to Mr. Ashley or not, that excellent gentleman accepted it as such. He got up, took his hat, stick, and gloves, and said, with a certain air of relief—

"Yes, to be sure—yes, you are right there, Barrington, I think. I don't see that I can do any good by staying here, and I may very likely be in the way. Will you bid your aunt good-bye for me, and thank her very much for her kindness? And, if you get a chance, you might just say a kind word or two to Jane; I shouldn't like her to think I had forgotten her. Well, good morning to you, Barrington. See you again soon, I daresay."

And so presently the street-door was shut behind Mr. Ashley.

After a time, Miss Barrington came down, looking very serious and subdued.

"Jeanne takes it with wonderful courage," she said. "She has gone to pack up, and she talks cheerfully, and says she is certain her brother will recover; but she is looking like death herself, poor child, all the time. We start to-night, of course. At what time does the train go? Half-past eight?—very well. I think, perhaps, you had better go away now, Harry. You might meet us at the station and see us off, if you like."

"I wish I could go with you!"

"Yes, but I am afraid that would hardly do. I will telegraph to you as soon as we arrive, and will write all particulars by the first post."

With this promise Barrington was fain to be content. He went away very sorrowfully, and spent the rest of the day alone in his rooms, dining early, so as to be at the station before the travellers. Amid the hurry and confusion of taking tickets and registering luggage, he saw them only for a few moments, and could but find time to whisper a word or two of sympathy and encouragement to Jeanne. He had intended to beg her to write to him; but at the last moment he felt reluctant to obtrude himself upon her, and only said, with a sigh, "I wonder how long it will be before I hear of you again?"

"Miss Barrington will be sure to let you know as soon as we reach our journey's end," answered Jeanne.

Her voice was as clear as usual; and when she gave her ungloved hand to Barrington, just before the train started, he noticed that it was quite steady and cool. Knowing her as well as he did by that time, he did not misjudge her on account of her outward serenity; but he would certainly have been better pleased if she had given him to understand, were it ever so faintly, that it gave her some pain to leave him.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXVII.

By the Lake of Geneva.

Jeanne and Miss Barrington, arriving at the Geneva railway-station weary and dispirited, after an unbroken journey from London, were rather alarmed when a servant from the Hôtel de l'Écu, having informed himself of their identity, took off his cap, and produced a note addressed to Mademoiselle de Mersac. It was so far more likely, they felt, to bring them bad news than good. But Jeanne, tearing open the envelope with cold hands, found to her relief that it only contained a line or two from Saint-Luc, apologising for his inability to meet her at the station. Until her arrival, he said, he did not like to leave his charge, who, however, was no worse—if anything a shade better—than when he had sent off his telegram.

"So far, so good!" cried Miss Barrington, reviving a little when this intelligence was read out to her. "Now, don't let us hurry off at once, but wait for our luggage, and have baths and breakfast before we attempt to do anything more. If you are going to help in nursing your brother, you must not begin by being tired out."

But Jeanne's patience was hardly equal to the following of this sound advice. She did, perforce, remain at the station till her luggage was delivered to her; but as soon as she reached the hotel, she left Miss Barrington to order what she pleased in the way of rooms and food, and, begging one of the waiters to show her her brother's room, followed him upstairs.

The man knocked gently at the door of a bedroom on the first floor, and immediately Saint-Luc came out; and, taking Jeanne by the hand, led her into a small adjoining sitting-room.

"Léon is certainly a little better," said he. "The doctor is more hopeful about him to-day than he was yesterday, and if he begins to mend now all may yet be well. I trust I did not do wrong in telegraphing for you."

"Wrong! no, indeed! If you had not telegraphed I should never have forgiven—I mean it was very kind of you to do so. Now I must see him."

"One moment, mademoiselle. I thought you ought to be at hand, in case things came to the worst; but, unless you insist upon it, it would perhaps be better for you not to go into your brother's room. You have not yet heard what his illness is."

"You told me it was fever. But it does not in the least signify, I have no fear of infection."

"It is scarlet fever."

"Nothing worse than that!" exclaimed Jeanne, much relieved.

"That may be bad enough sometimes. And it is very infectious."

Digitized by Google

"Not until the patient is recovering, I believe. But I should certainly claim the right to nurse him, whatever might be his disease."

"I expected as much; only it was my duty to warn you. Mademoiselle, you must not be too much shocked when you see poor Léon. He has been very ill, and is greatly altered—not by the fever alone. He would not have succumbed to it so easily as he has done if he had not been thoroughly shaken and weakened by the last weeks of the war."

Jeanne glanced at Saint-Luc, and noticed that he too was much changed. He was as thin as a greyhound; there was a plentiful sprinkling of grey in his black hair and moustache; his cheeks were hollow, his face tanned, weather-beaten, and scored with deep lines; and in his eyes, which seemed to have doubled in size, there was a weary patient look which Jeanne had never seen there before.

"You are not well yourself, monsieur," she said gently.

"There is nothing the matter with me; I am by no means as ill as I look. But one does not go through such a march as that last one of ours without bearing some traces of it afterwards. It has killed many of us, and turned many more into old men. And I personally have had a great deal of trouble and unhappiness lately; my poor regiment all but annihilated—half my friends killed, or dead of fatigue and exposure—disaster following disaster—our miserable retreat into Switzerland—and, to crown all, this illness of Léon's. That is the worst thing that has happened to me yet. All through our misfortunes my one consolation has been that he was still well and unhurt, and my one hope was that I should be able to restore him to you safe and sound at the end of the war. But it was not to be."

There was an odd, pathetic break in the man's voice which both touched and surprised Jeanne, and made her involuntarily draw nearer to him. "Dear M. de Saint-Luc," she said, "I know you have been all that is good and kind to Léon, and I never can thank you enough for all that you have done for him; but neither you nor any one else could have kept him from catching a fever."

"No. All we can do now is to pray for him."

"You do sometimes pray, then, now?"

"*Ma foi*, yes," answered Saint-Luc, with a faint smile. "I have looked on at so many horrors and so much suffering of late, that I have come to see that there must be another life after this. They tell me that that is not a logical conclusion; but if it be a true one, I can afford to do without the logic. You told me once that you would pray for me; and sometimes I have fancied that your prayers were bearing some fruit. But I must not talk of myself any more. I will take you at once to see Léon; but you must eat and rest before you can possibly be fit to begin nursing him."

And without further preface, Saint-Luc led the way into the small room where poor Léon lay, wasted to a shadow of his former self by

Digitized by Google

privation and illness, and muttering incoherently as he tossed to and fro in the delirium of the fever.

By the bedside was seated a white-capped Sister of Charity, whom Jeanne could not, at first, help regarding with a slight twinge of jealousy, but to whose presence she became quite reconciled when Saint-Luc spoke of her in terms of the deepest gratitude.

"But for the good Sister there," said he, "I do not know whether we should have kept our patient alive till now. You and I, mademoiselle, are willing to do our best; but neither of us, I suppose, knows much more of the art of nursing the sick than we do of the study of medicine, and if we were left to ourselves we should be making mistakes every hour."

Jeanne saw that her first impulse, which had been to dispense with this stranger's services, and to undertake the whole care of her brother herself, had been guessed; and saw also that it had been a foolish one. Before twenty-four hours were over, she had fully recognised her own lack of skill, and was thankful enough to have an experienced person at hand to give her directions.

For many days Léon hovered between life and death. Long after the fever had left him, the doctors shook their heads over his case, and would not say that they considered him out of danger; and though Jeanne exhausted herself in efforts to get a plain answer out of these grave gentlemen, it is needless to say that she did not succeed. The young man's whole system had received a shock, it appeared; and there were complications—not necessarily dangerous ones—still such as must give cause for some anxiety—&c., &c. But in the end the complications disappeared, or were conquered; and then it remained only to get up the invalid's strength.

And so, in the early spring days, when the buds of the chestnut-trees were beginning to show tufts of green, and the snow was melting off the lower mountains, and shadows of detached clouds sailed over the ruffled blue surface of the lake, a party of four persons was to be seen, nearly every day, getting into the carriage which was waiting for them at the door of the Hôtel de l'Écu. First, a tall, emaciated young man would be assisted down the steps and into the carriage by his three companions, who then proceeded to skirmish round him, placing pillows under his head, covering him up to the nose with rugs, and carrying out their several plans for his comfort without any regard whatever to the feeble protestations which he apparently raised from time to time. Having arranged matters to their satisfaction, two ladies, an elderly and a young one, would take their places respectively beside and opposite to the invalid; while the fourth person, a bronzed, grizzle-headed gentleman, would scramble up on to the box. Then the heavy vehicle would move away at a slow jog-trot, followed by the eyes of the neighbours, who had soon grown to know the strangers well by sight, and to feel a sympathetic interest in their doings.

The driver had very little trouble, at first, with these quiet, accom-

Digitized by Google

modating people, who allowed themselves to be guided entirely by his wishes with regard to the question of destination, and were driven out, day after day, along the most level roads, without raising any protest against the monotony of their routes. But as the weather grew warmer, and the sick gentleman stronger, they became restive, and insisted upon being taken to higher ground—to the slopes of the Grand Salève, or to the hills on the northern side of the lake, whence they could get a peep of the chain of Mont Blanc; and if, in the course of their drive, they espied a likely spot in one of the sunny meadows that lay on either side of the way, they would not unfrequently call a halt, and carrying off the rugs and carriage-cushions, would improvise out of their materials a couch for their charge, would group themselves around him, and so linger on by the hour together, quite forgetful of the patient coachman and horses who were awaiting their good pleasure by the roadside.

At such times as these Miss Barrington commonly rose, after a few minutes, leaving Léon enthroned between Saint-Luc and Jeanne, and wandered away by herself. Poor Miss Barrington had been growing more and more uneasy in her mind ever since the first days of her sojourn in Geneva. She began to wish most heartily that she had not interfered with the course of Jeanne's destiny, and to dread the consequences of her rashness. She consoled herself a little by thinking that, when all was said and done, Jeanne was in love with Barrington, and not with Saint-Luc. "But, dear me!" she would often sigh, when she was thinking matters over in the seclusion of her own room, "how is it possible that she can have made such a mistake! Harry is a very good fellow in his way; but he is no more to be compared with this M. de Saint-Luc than a dickey-bird is with an eagle. And the worst of it is that the man simply adores her—it is easy to see that. Harry will never adore anybody. He will break Jeanne's heart, I daresay, before he has done with her; and, in the meantime, she will have broken the heart of the other lover. A pretty mess we have made of it all between us!"

Saint-Luc had achieved a facile conquest of Miss Barrington. His handsome face and his subdued, grave manners made the more impression upon her because her nephew's description of the Vicomte had led her to fancy him a very different person. She had expected to meet a smirking, gesticulating little Frenchman, with a waxed moustache, who would be always laying his hand on his heart, and ogling and flirting, and getting in everybody's way; and the actual man was so very unlike this imaginary presentment of him, that she would have been predisposed in his favour, even if his devotion to Jeanne, his watchful care of Léon, and his courtesy towards herself had not quite won her heart. Encountering one another constantly by Léon's bedside, and discussing his chances of recovery together, at other times, more freely than they could do when Jeanne was present, these two became fast friends. Saint-Luc's English vocabulary was somewhat limited, and not adapted for indiscriminate use—being composed chiefly of pithy expressions learnt from Anglo-

Digitized by Google

Parisian grooms and jockeys in days gone by—but Miss Barrington brushed up her French, and, before long, she and Saint-Luc were upon a footing of perfect mutual comprehension and esteem. And now Miss Barrington's conscience troubled her sorely in that she was playing a traitor's part towards this kind and unsuspecting gentleman; for almost every post brought her letters from Harry, asking endless questions about Saint-Luc and his relations towards Jeanne—questions which she had promised to answer, and did answer—feeling, all the time, that she was no better than a spy in a friendly camp. And so, as the days went on, she became more and more taciturn, and would often, as has been said, wander away from the three younger people, by whom her absence was scarcely noticed.

Nor was Miss Barrington the only firm friend whom Saint-Luc earned for himself during the long weeks of Léon's illness and convalescence. If Jeanne's heart had been hard enough to hold out against the spectacle of this stalwart soldier converted into a sick-nurse, and watching unweariedly, night and day, in her brother's room—if she could have withstood his gentleness, his thought for others, and his determination neither to give up hope himself, nor to let those about him do so, her obduracy must have been vanquished when Léon grew strong enough to relate some of his war experiences, and to talk about his dear colonel, of whose courage, and modesty, and kindness he was never tired of giving instances. The young fellow was in a very weak state, and he could not so much as mention Saint-Luc's name without the tears rising into his eyes. Jeanne's last lingering remnant of prejudice against her *fiancé* died away as she listened. To her he was no longer the same person who had sickened her very soul with flattery, and whom she had almost insulted, by way of return, in old Algerian days. That Saint-Luc—that card-playing, lady-killing, unmanly Parisian—was dead—or rather, had never existed; and here, in his place, was a brave soldier, a perfect gentleman, a delightful companion, of whose friendship any one might be proud.

And certainly it was true that the war had in many respects changed Saint-Luc for the better. Some superficial foppishness, a certain half-veiled insolence of manner, had been purged from him by the terrible realities amidst which he had lived for six months. He was more sure of himself and less sensitive than of yore. But what set him at his ease more than anything else was his speedy discovery that he need no longer fear mistrust or misjudgment from Jeanne. Meeting daily in Léon's bedroom, comparing notes as to his treatment, discussing plans for his removal from Geneva, and talking over the various phases of the crisis he had just passed through, he and she drew imperceptibly nearer to one another, and reached at last a degree of intimacy from which neither of them could have retreated, even if so minded. But neither in the sick-room, nor in the course of any of the drives and walks which they took together by the shores of the lake, was any reference made to

Digitized by Google

the engagement which still bound them both. That question appeared to be, by common consent, left in abeyance. Léon was the connecting link between them; and it was upon Léon almost exclusively that their conversations turned.

But of course this sort of life could not go on indefinitely. It was but an *entr'acte*, at the close of which the personages with whom we are concerned knew that they must resume their several parts in the drama of life; and if two of them were in no great hurry to make a fresh start, the remaining couple were less patiently disposed. Miss Barrington was feverishly anxious to get the distressing scenes which she foresaw over and done with; and Léon, who was heartily sick of Geneva, and somewhat overrated his returning strength, importuned the doctor every day to sanction his departure for Algiers. To this, however, the doctor would not consent. The journey was too long and fatiguing a one, he said, to be attempted with safety yet awhile; but he agreed that his patient required some change of air and scene, and suggested Montreux, at the other end of the lake, as being, from its sheltered position, better suited to an invalid than Geneva; and Léon was rather taken with the idea. Anything to get away from that hateful town, and from the room in which he had passed so many dismal hours, he said.

To Montreux the whole party accordingly shifted their quarters one mild, sunny March day; and with the change, the young Marquis began to recover health so rapidly that it was evident that he would not be persuaded to loiter much longer in idleness under the shadow of the rocks and crags which tower above this part of the smiling Lac Léman. He began to talk, too, in a vague way, about plans for the future, and to turn his eyes upon Saint-Luc in a questioning manner embarrassing alike to that gentleman and to others.

Whether it were owing to this unpleasant behaviour on the part of Léon, or to other not very recondite causes, certain it is that a distinct gloom and disquietude damped the gaiety of the quartet after their flitting. Jeanne, in particular, lost her spirits and her appetite, and, at such times as her brother did not require her attendance, either shut herself up in her own room or set off on long rambles, in which Saint-Luc had too much tact to offer to bear her company.

It was on the tenth day of her stay at Montreux that she wandered up the hillside, towards the hour of sunset, to that ugly, but finely-situated Protestant church which is known to thousands of Englishmen and women. It was a beautiful, warm, still evening. The sun was sinking in a blaze of fiery and golden clouds behind the low purple rim of the Jura mountains; the snows of the Dent du Midi, and of the higher peaks on the Savoy side of the lake, were flushed with rosy light; the motionless sheet of water which bathed their base, and the villages reflected in its glassy surface, seemed not less serenely lifeless than they; and Jeanne, leaning over the stone parapet of the churchyard, and looking down upon the peaceful picture beneath her, remembered how, on

Digitized by Google

just such an evening as this, she had stood with Barrington on the ramparts at Fort Napoléon, and had seen, to her dismay, M. de Saint-Luc gallop past on his tired horse, and vanish into the twilight shades. The scene came back to her so vividly, and Saint-Luc's image was so present to her mind, that she was scarcely startled when the man himself came suddenly into view, and slowly approaching her, sat down on the wall by her side. She was not startled; but her heart beat a little more quickly, for she felt intuitively that he had not followed her for nothing, and that the interview which she had been dreading for some days past was now about to begin.

"Is it not a lovely evening?" she said, without turning round.

"Yes. Léon wanted to come out with me, but I would not let him. Sunset is always a dangerous time, and he must beware of chills."

"He is much stronger, though, this last week; don't you think so?"

"So much stronger, mademoiselle," answered Saint-Luc, smiling, "that Montreux has very nearly seen the last of him, I suspect. He is home-sick, and he is beginning to feel the want of some occupation again —and no wonder. Man is born to labour, and is never quite hopelessly unhappy except when he is idle. That is one of the things I have learnt in the last few months. I, who am fitted for nothing but soldiering, mean to devote the remainder of my days to that trade—supposing, that is to say, that I can induce our future rulers to give me some rank in the army. At present I hardly know what I am—a colonel without a regiment, or a sword, or a uniform. Whether the coming Government will confirm M. Gambetta's officers in their grades is an open question. We shall cut a queer figure, some of us, if we are so far distinguished; but I, for one, intend to urge my claims, such as they are; and in these cases it is half the battle to be upon the spot. So I start for Versailles to-morrow morning; and it was to bid you good-bye, mademoiselle, that I followed on your track this evening—which must be my excuse for having intruded upon you."

This was not at all what Jeanne had expected. She was troubled and taken by surprise, and did not in the least know how much might be intended to be implied in Saint-Luc's "Good-bye."

"To-morrow?" she exclaimed; "that is very short notice. Why did you not say anything about your plans before? Why must you leave us so soon?"

"Because you do not want me any longer," replied Saint-Luc, gently. "Léon is in a fair way towards complete recovery, and will soon be able to take charge of you, instead of being taken charge of. Those who, as I do, hope to be missed a little should be careful not to outstay their welcome. Moreover, unless I return to France at once, I shall have very little chance of getting what I want out of those gentlemen at the War Office."

"And when," asked Jeanne, looking straight before her, "may we expect to see you again?"

Digitized by Google

"Ah! who knows?"

Then there was a brief interval of silence, during which Saint-Luc more than once opened his lips, as if about to speak, and then appeared to think better of it. At last he began:—

"Mademoiselle, there is one thing that must be said before we part. I thought, at first, that I would go away without alluding to the subject, and would leave Léon to explain everything to you; but now I feel that I would rather tell you what there is to be told myself. You understand, of course, that what I am speaking of is the project of a marriage between us which once existed, but which I, for my part, renounced all idea of some months back. It was then that I discovered, quite accidentally, what had been your motive for consenting to marry me—a motive, mademoiselle, most worthy of you, and one of which I have no right to complain, but which, I am happy to tell you, need no longer influence you. I must have been very dense not to have understood from the beginning how matters were, for I remember that almost the first thing you did, when we were left alone together, that hot afternoon at El-Biar—do you recollect?—was to say something about Léon's so-called debt to me; but I suppose the truth is that I was too anxious to secure what I longed for, upon any terms, to look closely into the way in which it might come to me. I knew that I was nothing to you; but I had always an absurd hope that I should make you love me in the end, and that, somehow or other, things would come right as soon as we were married."

Saint-Luc paused; and Jeanne said, in a low voice, "I have behaved very badly to you, but it was to save Léon. And I did not know then how good you were. I thought—but it does not matter what I thought. I am ashamed of it now—I am ashamed of myself altogether."

"Dear mademoiselle, you have no reason to be so. You told me the truth quite plainly, only I was too dull to understand what you meant; and if excuses are to be made by one of us to the other, it is assuredly not from you that they should come. I have done mischief enough already by my selfishness and stupidity; but happily it is not irreparable; and you will soon forget the months of misery that you have had to undergo through my fault—soon forget them, I have no doubt."

Saint-Luc broke off, with a half-stifled sigh, and tossed a few pebbles over the parapet, while Jeanne sat silently watching him. After a time, he resumed:—

"It was one night last November that I found out the truth. We had been in the saddle all day, moving hither and thither on the cut-skirts of the forest of Marchenoir, in obedience to the orders that were sent us from time to time, and hearing the cannon always in the distance, but knowing nothing of what was going on, or whether our side was beaten or victorious. When the darkness came on, we had to bivouack as best we could, without shelter or fires—for the Prussians might have been all round us for anything we could tell—and as it was

Digitized by Google

bitterly cold, and a few flakes of snow were falling, neither Léon nor I attempted to go to sleep. We sat up and tried to keep ourselves warm, and talked about a great many things and people—about you, among the rest. I suppose we were both in a desponding mood, as half-frozen and half-starved men very generally are; and I remember that I spoke more openly than usual of the unhappiness and hopelessness of my life, and said a great deal which I need not repeat; to which Léon rejoined at length, that he had more reason to feel wretched than I had, because his conscience would let him have no peace when he thought of what he had brought upon you. And so, by degrees, it all came out. It was as if my eyes had been suddenly opened. Perhaps you may think that, as I knew beforehand that you did not care for me, what he said need not have startled me so much, and that it came to nearly the same thing whether you married me because your friends wished it, or because you wanted to relieve your brother of a debt. But there is a difference; and even a very great one, to my mind. All the difference, in fact, between a voluntary and a compulsory act on your part. It shocked and distressed me a great deal more than I can tell you; and I swore to Léon, then and there, that I would neither marry you against your will, nor accept one single franc of that ridiculous money from him in any shape or form. He was a little obstinate about it at first; but when he saw that he was hurting me, as well as making me angry by persisting, he yielded, and promised me that the subject should never be alluded to again between us. In war time, you see, and when a man is carrying his life in his hand, he sees more clearly what duty and honour really are than he can do under ordinary circumstances, and is less likely to confound them with the affectations which modern society often puts in their place. Léon and I were good friends and good comrades—he had rescued me from being taken prisoner, and very possibly from being shot, only a few days before—we understood one another, and I think we both saw that it would be almost laughable that I should ruin either his life or yours because I had once done a silly thing, and had made it appear as though some preposterous sum were due from him to me."

"But it was not appearance; the money was actually due," objected Jeanne, with her head averted, "and I still feel that he ought to pay you."

"I don't think you can quite believe that in your heart, mademoiselle; but, whether or no, the matter is one between him and me, and it is done with now for good and all. And so that is the end of my long story. I thought perhaps you would like to hear from my own lips that, so far as I have the power and right to say so, you are quite free."

Jeanne neither turned her face towards Saint-Luc nor made any reply. There are situations in which silence seems the only possible course, and she felt that this was one of them.

"I cannot say anything," she exclaimed at last, in a sort of despair. "What is there to be said? Ever since I have known you, I have had

Digitized by Google

nothing but kindness from you; and in return, I have given you nothing but rudeness and ingratitude. I took you for something quite different from what you are, until the other day, when your goodness to Léon enlightened me a little. But that is no excuse. I can only entreat you to forgive me—if you can."

She extended her hand, which Saint-Luc took, but relinquished again directly.

"I wish," said Jeanne, wistfully, "that you were not going away like this. I wish you could come and live close to us at Algiers, and let us try to show how grateful we are to you, and always shall be, as long as we live."

"I am afraid that plan would hardly succeed," answered Saint-Luc, with a rather forced laugh. "You would not be able to help tiring of my society; and besides, I do not think you will remain in Algiers all your life. I have been talking a good deal with your friend Miss Barrington lately, and I have heard from her—something which I was not unprepared to hear. Dear mademoiselle, he is coming here—he will arrive to-morrow; and that is why I am going away. There are things which one may be resigned to, but which one cannot bear to watch. After a few years we may meet again, I hope; just at first it would be too miserable. I always liked him, though he was my rival, and was not very amiable to me; and I think he will make you happy. But no one can ever love you more than I do."

Jeanne did not attempt to dispute or ignore the implication.

"I am very sorry for you," she said simply. "It is no use to say that I am not worth loving, because one does not love people for what they are worth, but only because one cannot help it. I wish with all my heart that I could love you, for I think you are the best man I ever knew; but I cannot—it is not in my power. All I can give you is friendship; and that you do not care for."

"Indeed I do. I value your friendship more than anything in the world, and you will always be in my thoughts in the future, just as you have been in the past. Only, although we are friends, we must remain apart—at any rate for a long time to come. When we do meet again, all this pain and disappointment will be an old story, and most likely you will think I have forgotten it. In any case, we will never refer to it again. I shall hear of you often through Léon, who has promised to write to me, and I hope he will never have to tell me anything but the best of news of you, and all who are dear to you."

Saint-Luc was certainly behaving very generously; and during the remaining half-hour that Jeanne spent with him in the churchyard, she did what she could to show him how deeply she felt his generosity. But it is not easy to receive coals of fire without wincing; and when Jeanne went to bed that night, and mentally passed in review the events of the evening, she felt that she had been awkward and ungracious, and had left many things unsaid which she would never be able to say now.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

In which all Jeanne's Troubles are Dispersed.

The next morning a rather dull and melancholy little party sat down to the breakfast-table. Saint-Luc had started very early, and was already many miles on his way towards France. The side of the table where he had been wont to sit was vacant; his chair was pushed back against the wall; the French newspaper from which he had been accustomed to read extracts aloud, at this hour of the day, lay unopened on a sofa. There was a mute reproach in these signs that one of the four persons who had lived together for so many weeks in harmony had dropped out of the small circle; and the three who remained exchanged sad and guilty looks while they ate their breakfast, for they felt that they had not only lost their friend, but had driven him away from among them. Miss Barrington, who, perhaps, thought she had more cause for remorse than the other two, slipped out of the room at the first opportunity, and as soon as she was gone, Léon relieved his feelings by an outburst of lamentation.

"Poor Saint-Luc!—my poor, dear colonel! How shall I ever manage to get on without him! I shall never have such another friend—never, so long as I live. So generous, so good-humoured, so ready to give the coat off his back to anybody who had none! Ah, my dear Jeanne, he was a man among ten thousand, though you never knew it—you could not very well know it, having scarcely met him except in drawing-rooms. And now he has gone, and perhaps we shall never see him again. When I think of all that he has done for me, and that this is his recompense—to be turned out of the house, so to speak——"

"Don't talk like that, Léon—pray don't," interrupted Jeanne. "You break my heart."

"I am not blaming you, it is no fault of yours, only I cannot help wishing it could have been otherwise. I have been hoping for such a long time that, when you saw him again, and heard how he had insisted upon giving up that claim he had against me rather than that you should be in any way bound to him—I have been hoping that you would see what he is worth, and reward him as he deserves to be rewarded. If you were never to fall in love with anybody—and I thought you never would—it seemed as if you could not have chosen a better husband than Saint-Luc, who worships you. But there was no help for it, I suppose. Mr. Barrington is a very charming person, and I shall be delighted to renew my acquaintance with him—only he is not my dear colonel; and when one man takes another's place in a party of four, it is impossible to avoid drawing comparisons between them."

"I am sorry that you are disappointed, Léon."

"Oh, my disappointment is nothing; it is of his that I am thinking. Well, it is useless to say any more about it. Women are queer creatures."

Digitized by Google

And so Léon picked up his stick and his straw hat, and left the room with a slow, dejected gait. He might have spared a little more sympathy for the sister who had done and suffered so much for him; but Jeanne did not resent his petulance, knowing that convalescents are proverbially short-tempered, and thinking, besides, that he had some excuse for feeling chagrined at the failure of his hopes.

After he had left her she sat for a long time beside the open window, thinking over all that had come and gone, and marvelling at the easy, natural manner in which her troubles had been dispersed. It seemed, as Saint-Luc had said, almost laughable that either she or Léon should have contemplated turning one or other of their lives into a tragedy because of a mere error in judgment, and she was no longer too proud to accept the gift—if gift it could be called—which he had made to her brother. A few months ago she would have shrunk back in horror from the idea of allowing any debt incurred by one of the family—however absurd a one—to be cancelled by the free forgiveness of the creditor; but she was changed, in more ways than one, from what she had been a few months ago. Then, for instance, she would have been overjoyed beyond all power of expression if by any means she could have been set free of her engagement to Saint-Luc; whereas now she was not overjoyed at all—only remorseful, almost regretful, and more than half-ashamed of the thrill of delight with which she had heard that Barrington was on his way to Switzerland. She was not one of those who can manage to be happy at the cost of suffering to others; and at this moment her thoughts were less with the man whom she loved than with the man who loved her, and whom she had been forced to send empty away. She was a little surprised at herself for feeling so dispirited now that her wildest dreams of happiness were, to all seeming, about to be realised; "but perhaps," thought she, "it is because I am so tired, and my head aches so, that I feel more as though misfortune than joy were coming to me."

Ere long Miss Barrington re-appeared, and sat down beside her, eyeing her the while in a curious, half-guilty manner.

"I suppose you know that Harry will be here this afternoon?" she said.

"Yes, M. de Saint-Luc told me he was coming."

"You don't look as if you thought it particularly good news. If the perversity of human nature puts things askew again, at the last moment, after all the trouble I have taken to set them straight, I shall be much more than disgusted. I do hope and trust you are not beginning to repent."

"To repent? Of what?" asked Jeanne, turning her grave eyes upon her questioner.

"Why, of having sent M. de Saint-Luc about his business, of course. Surely we needn't beat about the bush—you and I. We both know that M. de Saint-Luc is no more going to Versailles because he is anxious about his epaulettes than Harry is coming here for the pleasure of seeing

Digitized by Google

me; and I should take it as a great favour if you would relieve my mind of doubt as to what the end of it all is to be. I daresay you don't like talking about it, but there is nobody here but ourselves. Do just tell me that it is all right, and I will pledge myself not to ask you any more questions."

Jeanne laughed slightly. "I suppose it is what you call 'all right,'" she answered.

"Thank Heaven for that!" ejaculated Miss Barrington, with fervour. "At least, then, I have not made any mistake about facts whatever I may have done as to persons. I daresay you may remember my recommending you once—like the egregious old idiot that I am—to throw over your French admirer, whom I had not even seen at that time. If I had known a little more about him, I should have advised you in quite another sense, you may be sure! Not that my advice would have made much difference one way or the other, I suppose, and, for Harry's sake, I am glad you have chosen as you have done; still I do feel sorry for the other. How could you have the heart to let him go? I should not have done so in your place. But then I should have fallen over head and ears in love with him from the first. What made you take a fancy to Harry when you might have had this splendid fellow at your feet for the rest of your life?"

"Miss Barrington, you said you would not ask me any more questions."

"Did I? Well, I don't suppose you could answer such questions as my last one if you wished. And, after all, there is good in Harry—there must be, or he would not be so universally popular as he is. Even poor, M. de Saint-Luc, who had no reason to speak well of him, said a great deal in his praise. And, by the way, do you know it was M. de Saint-Luc who suggested that I should send for him? He said—and I quite agreed with him—that delay would save no one any suffering, and would keep two people out of a part of their share of earthly happiness; so I telegraphed to Harry that same day."

"Oh, why did you do that?" exclaimed Jeanne, in a tone of great pain and annoyance. "I wish you had not! He would have come of his own accord in time if he had wished it; and now he will think—he will think——"

"Why, Jeanne," ejaculated Miss Barrington, in consternation, "you are actually crying! My dear girl, all this has been too much for you. Do you know that you are as white as a sheet? You are not ill, are you?"

"No, only my head aches so," answered Jeanne, drying her eyes.

"Go up to your own room then, my dear, and lie down and rest till I call you. Don't let us have any more tears. We are all going to be merry now, and forget the troubles that are over, and can't be helped, and I don't want you to meet Harry with a sad face."

Jeanne obeyed—not unwillingly. It suited her mood better to be left in solitude than to listen to Miss Barrington's moralising; and, besides, she was feeling really tired and unwell, and was glad to stretch

Digitized by Google

herself out upon her bed, and close her eyes and build castles in the air, with no one to interrupt her.

Lying thus in contented idleness, she heard at length the hotel omnibus drive up from the station. She heard a good deal of talking and laughter below; she recognised the voices of her brother and Miss Barrington, and also a third voice, the sound of which called up the blood into her cheeks. And so she rose and stole softly to the window, and was rewarded by descrying from thence the top of a brown hat and a foreshortened figure, clad in an English homespun suit, which, after a few minutes, vanished under the doorway directly beneath her. Then, as every movement set her head throbbing, and as the bright light outside hurt her eyes, she returned to her bed and declined to stir, even when Miss Barrington's maid came in with a message from her mistress to the effect that Mr. 'Enery had arrived, and that she was expected downstairs.

"I really cannot move," she said, "my head is so bad. And I am not in the least hungry, so that if you would ask somebody to bring me a cup of tea and some toast, I would rather not appear at dinner to-night. Will you tell Miss Barrington, please, that I shall go down afterwards if I feel better?"

Miss Barrington was much amused at what she was pleased to consider a small attempt at coquetry on the part of her stately *protégée*, and was very facetious upon the subject during dinner.

"Come, M. de Mersac," said she to Léon, as soon as the dessert had been put upon the table, "you and I will go into the reading-room and have a look at the papers. Jeanne will be down in a few minutes, and if there are too many of us in this pokey little salon, we shall exhaust the oxygen and make her head worse. I have no doubt that Harry's brilliant conversation will act as a tonic upon her if she is allowed to enjoy it alone."

Léon got up at once and held open the door. He could not endure Miss Barrington, whose good-humoured brusquerie always set his teeth on edge, but he fully agreed with her as to the advisability of their both making themselves scarce at this particular juncture.

"I will bid you good night, Mr. Barrington," he said, nodding over his shoulder as he followed the old lady out of the room. "I am still ordered to keep early hours."

"Good night, and pleasant dreams to you," responded Barrington, cheerfully. "I shan't be very late myself, I daresay. Of all the back-breaking things I know, a journey in a French express train is the worst, and I have long arrears of sleep to make up."

Our friend Barrington was in the best of spirits. Absence, together with sundry jealous misgivings, had fully convinced him that life without Jeanne would be simply unendurable; and knowing, as he did, that the last obstacle in the way of his union with her had now been disposed of, he was by no means sorry that their first meeting was not to take place in the presence of witnesses.

Digitized by Google

He was not kept waiting long. Miss Barrington and Léon had barely been gone five minutes when Jeanne appeared at the door—a tall, white figure, looking dim and shadowy in the failing light. Barrington started up with an exclamation of joy, and presently, by some means or other—how it happened he could hardly have said—he was holding Jeanne in his arms, and her face was hidden on his shoulder, and the supreme moment, which had been deferred so often and so long, had come and gone like a flash.

About half an hour later the lovers were sitting together by the open window, holding one another's hands, as if they feared that something might come between them again if either of them let the other go.

"My darling," said Barrington, "you are not looking at all well. I did not believe much in that headache when my aunt spoke of it, but now I begin to be afraid it is genuine. Or is it that you have been wearing yourself out with nursing?"

"Oh, no, it is not that!" answered Jeanne. "I think," she added presently, with something between a laugh and a shiver—"you will not be very much alarmed, I hope—but I *think* I am going to have the scarlet fever."

"Scarlet fever! Good Heavens! You are not speaking seriously, are you? What makes you think so?—why did you not say anything about it before? What are the symptoms of scarlet fever? Sore throat? Have you a sore throat?"

Barrington flew into an absolute panic. He ordered Jeanne off to bed, found out the address of the nearest doctor, and despatched a messenger in search of him; summoned his aunt and Léon, put all manner of senseless questions to them, and fidgeted from room to room, worrying everybody with inquiries and suggestions, and "making as much fuss as a singed bluebottle," grumbled Miss Barrington, who did not choose to meet trouble half-way, and could not be brought to see that there was any reason as yet for all this alarm.

The doctor, however, when he came, was rather inclined to support Jeanne's own idea of the cause of her indisposition. He could not give any decided opinion before the next morning, he said; but he was bound to warn the young lady's friends that her symptoms were of a rather disquieting kind; and at the expiration of a few hours, there was no longer room for two opinions as to the nature of the case. Scarlet fever it certainly was, albeit, to all appearance, in a mild form; and when once the fact was incontestably established, Miss Barrington was as much perturbed by it as her nephew could have wished. If this had happened a fortnight ago, she said, she would not have complained so much; they had all known that, then, there was a fair chance of such a misfortune occurring. But that it should have come now, when they had given up even thinking of danger any longer, when Léon had been officially reported free from infection, and when there had seemed every prospect of the dawn of happier times, was, to say the least of it, very bad luck.

Digitized by Google

"Look at the expense of the thing alone! It only remains for you to be taken ill, Harry, as soon as we have accomplished our next move, and for me to follow suit on the stage after, and we shall have made the fortune of four hotels, and crippled our resources for years to come. If you had seen our bill at Geneva! I don't blame the people for asking what they do, because of course it must be a horrid nuisance and a great loss to them to have scarlet fever patients in their house; but really one must be a millionaire to afford oneself these luxuries more than once in a lifetime."

"As if it mattered!" cried Barrington, indignantly. "I would gladly give up half of what I have in the world to see Jeanne well again. I know you will laugh at me, Aunt Susan, but I can't help having a conviction that she will not get over this. The very first time that I saw her, I felt sure that she was predestined to misfortune; and all the time that she was with me last night, I was haunted by a foreboding that something *must* happen before long to separate us. It is useless to reason about it, but it is beyond a doubt that there are certain people who are born to unhappiness."

"There are certain people who are born fools," retorted Miss Barrington, with much asperity. "If you are going to talk that sort of rubbish, Harry, instead of making yourself useful, you had better be off home again, and I will bring Jeanne back to you as soon as she is in a fit state to travel. You put me out of all patience with your nonsensical fancies. I believe you would be more than half resigned to losing her if you could only be sure of taking part in an affecting death-bed scene before she went."

"That is neither a true nor a kind thing to say," answered Barrington, quietly. And the old lady had the grace to feel a little ashamed of her hasty words.

"There, there, Harry, you know I did not mean it. I forgot myself," she acknowledged frankly, "and I beg your pardon. To tell you the truth, I have been thoroughly upset by different things these last few days, and I suppose this was the last straw. Please overlook what I said, and forget it."

The good-natured Harry readily consented to overlook his aunt's thoughtless speech; but he could not quite forget it—nor, indeed, was the poor old lady herself destined to do so. For, alas! Barrington's sinister presentiment turned out to be only too well founded, and Jeanne's portion of earthly happiness, it appeared, was likely to be a brief one. Almost before they had realised that her life might be in danger; almost before they had become accustomed to the idea that she was ill, she was sinking fast. The doctors were as powerless to save her as were Léon's frantic prayers and Miss Barrington's obstinate belief, which held out to the last, that she would be able to pull her *protégée* through in spite of all the doctors in the world. Her illness was neither so long nor so severe a one as her brother's had been; but for all that, she

Digitized by Google

could not rally from it; and those about her were forced to admit, at length, what many others have had to acknowledge before them, that what, in their first horror and incredulity, they had cried out against as impossible, not only could be, but was.

And so it came to pass that, on a warm spring evening, Jeanne lay on her bed, with a sorrowful little group around her, waiting for the end. The windows were wide open; the curtains were fluttering with a cool breeze that was blowing in from the lake; broad sunbeams streamed across the room, and fell upon the wooden floor and the white wall, and upon Jeanne's wasted hands, as they lay on the counterpane. No one could have died more peacefully. She was too weak to speak much; but she looked round upon them all—upon Léon's pale, tear-stained face—upon Miss Barrington's rugged features, which were twitching a little, in spite of their owner's fortitude—upon Turco's big white head—lastly upon Barrington, who was kneeling by her bedside. And there her eyes rested longest.

"If only M. de Fontvieille and M. de Saint-Luc and Fanchette were here, I should have no one left to wish for," she said once, with the ghost of a smile.

She sent messages to these absent friends, assuring them of her loving remembrance, and of her contentment and her willingness to leave the world. "We shall all be together again very soon," she said, with that forgetfulness of time and change which often seems to come over those who, for their part, have nearly done with both. The last Sacraments had been administered to her some hours before. At length, towards sunset, she begged to be left alone with Léon; and he, coming out, after a few minutes, but not being able to speak, signed to Barrington to take his place in the chamber of death, and then went away and hid himself.

What passed between the dying girl and the man whom she loved with a love deeper than he, perhaps, could even understand, need not be set down here. It is hard to be called away from life just when life has acquired a meaning it never had before, and when all the forfeited future seems full of brightest promise. It is hard to sink powerlessly into that impenetrable darkness, that profound silence, towards which those loved ones who are left on earth must stretch out their hands in vain. And though in some—as in Jeanne de Mersac—faith is strong enough to rob the grave of its victory, yet there is, and must needs be, a sting in death which youth could hardly bear were it not for sheer physical exhaustion. Barrington has never spoken of that last scene to any of his friends; and Barrington is a man who, with a very little encouragement—or even without it—will speak upon most subjects.

When he came out of Jeanne's room again, he was very pale, but more composed than Miss Barrington had expected him to be.

"Is it all over?" she whispered.

Digitized by Google

"No," he answered; "but there has been a change in the last few minutes. She does not seem to know me, or to notice anything any more. I think she has fallen asleep."

And so it proved to be. Léon came back after a time, and the three kept watch while the daylight waned, and darkness fell, and hour after hour slipped by; but Jeanne slept peacefully on, and never spoke or opened her eyes again.

They watch'd her breathing thro' the night,
  Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
  Kept heaving to and fro.

But when the morn came dim and sad,
  And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed—she had
  Another morn than ours.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Conclusion.

Miss Barrington was sitting in the nursery of a country-house the other day. The children had all run out, and she began to turn over the leaves of the numerous picture-books which lay upon the table. A volume of Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales had found its way among them, and the old lady, opening it at hap-hazard, dipped into the middle of "The Ice Maiden." She glanced over a few pages of the story, and then grew interested, and read it through to the end, where the hero sinks beneath the blue waters of the Lake of Geneva on the eve of his marriage-day, and the poor little bride is left weeping on the island on which, but a few minutes before, the happy pair had been telling one another that earth had now nothing more to bestow upon them. "Do you think this a sad story?" asks the author, in his quaint, friendly way, at the conclusion. These two were parted at the moment when, as they had said, earth had nothing more to bestow upon them. How would it have been with them if their wishes had been fulfilled, and they had gone back to their home in the mountains as man and wife? The night before, the bride had had a prophetic answer to this question, in the form of a dream, which consoled her somewhat in the midst of her distress.

Miss Barrington took off her spectacles and wiped her eyes, into which the tears had risen while she had been reading. It was some years since she had turned her back sadly upon this same Lake of Geneva, leaving on its shores the body of one who had become very dear to her, though their friendship had been but short, and who had been snatched away not less suddenly than the young chamois hunter in the "Ice Maiden." Would earth have had anything more to bestow upon poor Jeanne if her life had been spared? Miss Barrington wondered. And then she shook her head, sighed, laid down the book, and went to

Digitized by Google

the open window, whence she could see the children playing in the garden, and the sun setting behind the Scotch firs in the park.

"Would Harry have made her happy, I wonder?" murmured the old lady, vexing herself with a question which can never be of the slightest importance again. "He was frantic with grief at first, and then, for more than a year, he went about looking so miserable that it made one's heart ache to see him. And now he is married to that dull, devoted Helen, and has got three children. It all sounds very heartless and horrible; but of course, it is not so. It is only human nature, and the way of this hard world, which I am three-parts sick of myself. He seems happy enough; but I think he would have been happier with her; and perhaps—*perhaps* she would have been happy with him. But I don't know. One never can tell."

Those whose judgment of Barrington's character has been formed from long acquaintance, and is unprejudiced by any ties of relationship, feel less uncertainty upon this point. It requires no very profound insight into human nature to perceive that a marriage between Barrington and Jeanne de Mersac must very soon have ended in disappointment and loss of illusions for one, if not for both of them. Barrington himself was aware of this, and was in a great measure prepared for it. He knew that, after a time, he would inevitably, whether he willed it or not, drift away from his wife, fall back among old associates and into old habits, and occupy himself with interests and amusements in which she could have no share. Life cannot be one long honeymoon, he would probably have said, with a sigh over the impossibility of so blissful an arrangement, and so would have submitted with resignation to the sway of natural and social laws. Such, no doubt, is the common lot. But Jeanne, as it happened, was an exceptional person; and it is very unlikely that friendship would ever have been accepted by her in lieu of love, or the real Barrington, as he would have gradually become revealed to her, in the place of the wholly imaginary person to whom she had given all her heart. And perhaps—for there is no such thing as perfection on earth—her temper would have become soured in the long run, and she would have grown morose and silent, and vexed her husband by appearing at breakfast with a sad face, which thing the present Mrs. Barrington is not likely ever to do.

Every one acknowledges that there are many worse misfortunes than an early death; but the sudden removal of a young and beautiful girl, into whose hands all the brightest prizes of life seem to be on the point of falling, naturally excites more pity and sympathy than the ordinary run of human sorrows; and when the same post brought to Algiers the news of Jeanne's engagement to Barrington, of her illness, and of its terribly swift ending, a feeling akin to consternation spread among the ranks of all who had known her there.

Poor old M. de Fontvieille took to his bed as soon as the intelligence reached him, declaring that he had now nothing left to live for, and that

Digitized by Google

he would never leave his room again. But as he was not ill, and as he got very hot and uncomfortable lying in bed all day, he had to get up again eventually, and go about as usual. He died, in fact, only a short time since, leaving his jewels to Léon's wife, by whom they are worn, to the admiration of all Algiers, and even of Paris, upon occasion.

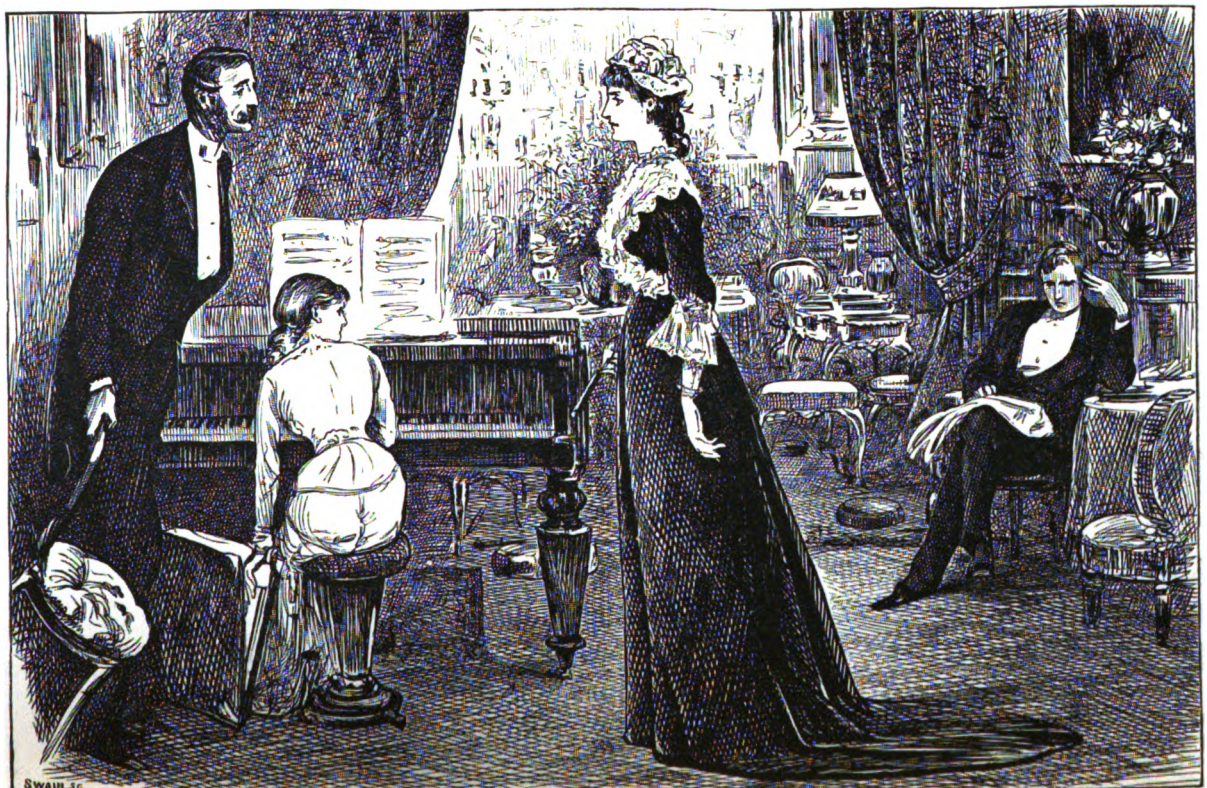
And so the memory of Jeanne de Mersac, and of her untimely fate, has well nigh faded away. How long, and by how many people, can any one expect to be remembered after death? Jeanne, during her lifetime, had had but few friends, and of those few M. de Fontvieille is no more; Léon, though he has not forgotten his sister, has ceased to mourn for her, having a wife and a young family to occupy his thoughts; and Barrington, when he thinks of her at all, thinks of her rather as a beautiful, lost vision, than as one who might have passed her life with him here, and whom he may yet encounter hereafter.

But in one of the large garrison towns of France there is a certain Colonel of Chasseurs-à-Cheval, a lean, patient, taciturn man, much beloved in his regiment, as being both a keen soldier and a good friend to all who stand in need of help, and looked upon with awe and respect by his officers as a "man with a history," the nature of which has been the subject of many a bold flight of fancy—a man, too, who, as the famous Vicomte de Saint-Luc, is reported to have made all Paris open its eyes in bygone days. To this grey-headed Colonel Jeanne de Mersac is in nowise dead, nor has ever died; and when he kneels, as he does nearly every day, in the cathedral of the town where he is quartered—for he is a most devout and orthodox Catholic—he never fails to ask that he may meet her once more, in the fulness of time, where "they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God."

THE END.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



AND THEN IN A MOMENT ALL WAS CHANGED.

Digitized by Google

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

APRIL, 1880.

Mrs. Austin.

I.

"ALL women are matchmakers—some for themselves and the rest for other people," said Mr. Francis Leicester. He stood on his own hearth-rug, with his back to his own chimney-piece, and surveyed the subject comprehensively from that advantageous position. And he was entitled to have an opinion of his own about it, for he was nearly three-and-twenty.

Two ladies were present. "Which am I, pray?" said the younger, instantly accepting the challenge. She looked up at the speaker with great bright brown eyes, like those of some sylvan creature. "Which am I—for myself or for other people?"

Frank laughed, and turned away a little, gazing at a golden effect of September sunshine on an old family portrait. "Oh, I'm not going to be personal," he said; "you don't catch me so. I mean women in general."

"Oh, women in general! I don't care for women in general," said Miss Vivian. "And I don't much believe that anybody else does."

"I may say what I like, then?"

Digitized by Google

She nodded gravely. "Yes; on the understanding that it doesn't apply to anybody in particular."

"I'm afraid, perhaps, that won't be very interesting," said Frank, doubtfully.

"I'm quite sure it won't be; it makes me yawn only to think of it."

"But this does apply to somebody," said young Leicester's mother, smiling, from her easy-chair. "Frank means me. Whenever he wants to make rude remarks about anything I do, he always calls me women in general. But this time he ought to be ashamed of himself, for—thank goodness!—whatever I may be, I am *not* a matchmaker."

"Say that again!" Leicester exclaimed. "To-day of all days!"

"Well, I am *not*," she repeated firmly. "I don't want to make a match of it, I'm sure. Only it seemed hard that they shouldn't meet somewhere, and have another chance."

"Just so," said Frank. "Let's hope they'll profit by it. I should think they might know their own minds by now; they are getting rather elderly, these lovers of yours, aren't they?"

"Elderly—well, they are not so young as Tiny here; but they are a good deal younger than I am. I don't see why they shouldn't have their feelings as well as other people."

"Oh, I've no objection," said Frank, with his hands in his pockets, and his chin a little higher than usual. If *I* wanted to make a match, it should be a new one while I was about it, not a *réchauffé* affair like this. But that's your concern, and I'm sure I wish you all success. Give them their wedding-breakfast, if you like. I'll throw old shoes after them, and go in for all the rest of the foolery with the greatest pleasure." He turned to Tiny Vivian. "Will you be bridesmaid?"

Tiny nodded. "If it's a pretty dress."

"That's settled, then. You shall support the elderly bride, I'll be best man, and my mother shall be the rest of the affectionate relatives. Why, we can do it all in the family! No, though! who's to give her away? The best man can't, can he?"

"It doesn't sound quite proper. I wouldn't have the best man to give *me* away," said Tiny.

"Better have the best man to take you," Frank suggested. "Well, it's awkward, but for such a little amateur performance I think I might double the parts."

"Couldn't you manage a slight change of costume as you dodged from one side to the other?"

"Do not be so silly," said Mrs. Leicester. "And do remember that it is a secret—that nobody knows anything about this old love affair. It is quite a secret."

"You hear?" said Frank, turning his head a little, and looking down at Tiny.

"I don't see why you say 'You hear?' to me. I'm sure you're quite as bad, or worse," said the girl smartly.

Digitized by Google

"Oh, but it isn't that. I wasn't doubting your discretion or my own; but I thought you might have a few spare secrets about you, and not have known where to put them for safe keeping. I wanted you to observe that you might bring them here."

"Now, Frank, you know I always do keep secrets," said his mother. "I shall keep this one," she added, virtuously. "I'm only afraid you and Tiny won't."

"I should keep it better, I think," said Tiny, "if I knew a little more about it. One is so apt to let out half a secret while one is hunt-out about for the other half—don't you think so?" She laid her hand coaxingly on Mrs. Leicester's. "Do tell me. If nobody knows it, how do you know it?"

"My sister told me—my dear sister, who is dead," Mrs. Leicester replied, in a slightly altered voice. Tiny's brown eyes dilated for a moment, and the corners of her eager, smiling mouth went down a little. It was just the attention which any mention of the King of Terrors ordinarily receives in the course of conversation. "But there's hardly anything to tell," the elder lady went on; "Caroline knew something of young South when he was really little more than a lad, and he liked to talk to her about Miss Fairfax. It was quite a boy-and-girl attachment, you know; I don't think it was ever allowed to be a regular engagement; but Caroline used to tell me about it till I felt as if I knew him. She said it was quite touching to see how the young fellow worshipped the very ground Mildred Fairfax trod on. And then he got his commission, and was ordered off to India. Oh, it's a long while ago! I remember Caroline coming in to tell me that she had just said good-by to him, poor boy."

"He went away," said Tiny. "Yes, but why didn't they marry afterwards?"

"Well, I don't know. After Caroline died, I never heard any more about them. But when Mildred Fairfax was four or five and twenty she married young Austin, and he was a friend of my husband's; so I saw something of her then, of course. We gave them a pair of candlesticks, pink and gold, very pretty; Mr. Leicester bought them in Paris. But I suppose they would be quite wrong now."

"Never mind, most likely they are broken," Frank suggested, in a consoling voice.

"It was Miss Fairfax who didn't wait for Mr. South, then?" said Tiny, pursuing the story. "And did he get married, too?"

"Oh, no! he never married. He wasn't in the army long; he sold out, and went to live with an uncle, who died some years ago, and left him a nice little property. No, he never married."

"Why didn't she wait for him? I sha'n't like her! Was Mr. Austin rich?"

"Pretty well, I think. He was a barrister, but he had money of his own. She is left very well off altogether. But I had quite lost

Digitized by Google

sight of her for a long time, till we happened to meet at the Stauntons' place about a month ago, and I asked her to come and stay a few days. That's all."

"I sha'n't like her," Tiny repeated softly. "But you haven't accounted for Mr. South, now," she persisted, with pitiless interest.

"Oh, that was rather funny; it was at Mrs. Lane's—Minna Wilkinson she used to be. Some one happened to speak of Mr. Gilbert South, and I was curious. I asked to be introduced to him, and we had quite a long talk about poor Caroline and old times. Wasn't it odd I should meet him just after I had seen Mrs. Austin again? He mentioned her, and told me he used to know her, and began to ask so many questions that I invited him to come and meet her here. And he jumped at it—quite jumped!" said Mrs. Leicester, sinking back.

"He is in love with her still," said Tiny, pensively; "but she doesn't deserve it."

Frank settled his shoulders against the carved woodwork of the chimney-piece. "But how long ago is it since these young affections were blighted?" he inquired. "That's what I want to know."

Mrs. Leicester sat pondering the question. "I don't quite know," she said. "What year was it that young South went out to India? I could find out—I must have got it down somewhere, for it was just when you had the measles."

Frank uttered a very impatient ejaculation. "I wish to Heaven there was something you couldn't calculate in that fashion!" he said. Then he began to laugh, and turned half apologetically to Tiny: "Haven't you noticed? My ailments, whooping-cough and mumps, and that kind of thing——"

"Frank, you never had mumps! You are thinking of——"

"—— have infected all history. In fact, nothing has happened *but* my ailments ever since I was born. Ask my mother."

Mrs. Leicester, who had risen to take her knitting from the table, laid her hand on his sleeve. "They haven't been very bad, luckily," she said, looking up at his handsome healthy face.

"If they had been, the world would have come to an end, wouldn't it?"

"Yes," she said, "it would—for me."

Frank bent his head and touched her smooth forehead with his lips. "For sentimental folly," he remarked, as he disengaged himself, "there is nothing like—like—women in general! Well, good-by for the present."

"Where are you going?"

"Why, your superannuated lovers can't be here, either of them, for the next hour, and I promised Huntley I'd go and look at those cottages by the river they say ought to come down. It's a shame to spend such an afternoon indoors." He looked at Tiny. "Won't you come, too? You haven't had a walk to-day."

Digitized by Google

"Not had a walk! Well, you were playing lawn-tennis for hours—I should like to know what you call that!" Mrs. Leicester exclaimed.

"I call it lawn-tennis," said Frank.

"It wasn't a walk," Tiny chimed in. "I'll get my hat; I should like to go." She was at the door in a moment, looking back with an eager, glowing little face as Mrs. Leicester called after her, "Mind you are not late coming home."

Frank Leicester was a fine young fellow, good-looking, good-hearted, good-tempered, and the owner of Culverdale Manor. Had he described himself he would have given that last clause the foremost place. He was intensely conscious of the fact that he was a landed proprietor, and family tradition had impressed him with the belief that Culverdale Manor, taking it altogether, was the most desirable spot on the surface of the globe. Any trifling drawbacks were honourably disposed of in the limitation "taking it altogether." Frank could not part himself in his own mind from the estate, which had belonged to the Leicesters for so many years. He was young Leicester of Culverdale, and, if he had not been Leicester of Culverdale, he would hardly have known what he was or what he could be. It may be questioned whether it would have been possible to make provision for Frank anywhere else in the universe. It would certainly have been difficult. In his own house, on his own land, or in any company where there was the requisite knowledge of the importance of Culverdale, he was fearless, outspoken, and perhaps a little conceited, with the happy and harmless conceit of a young fellow who has been petted all his life, and thinks the world at once better and easier to deal with than most of us find it. But in any society where Culverdale counted for nothing, he would have been shy and humble, with a very moderate opinion of his own abilities. Briefly, it may be said that Frank *was* Culverdale. It was a prosperous, well-managed, wealthy, and sheltered estate, beautiful after a certain trim and English ideal of beauty, but with nothing wild or original about it. It was just so much placid contentment lying in a ring fence. Frank was one with Culverdale when Culverdale was at its best, with the airy and hopeful freshness of spring about it and the beauty of promise in copse and meadow. Whether he would ever be one with Culverdale when it was at its worst, an expanse of sodden and heavy acres lying drearily under a dull November sky, was a question which might suggest itself to a chance observer more readily than to those who knew and loved him as he was.

Perhaps it is unnecessary to say that Frank was essentially a country gentleman. There was a pleasant harmony between the young squire and his surroundings which would demand a pleasant word to describe it. It is true that he had travelled as much or more than his neighbours, making the most of a limited knowledge of that tongue which is neither English nor French, though it has affinities with both those languages. The fact that Culverdale was not much known on the Continent did not depress Frank. He was sorry for the natives of other lands (comprehen-

Digitized by Google

sively described as "foreign beggars"), who, owing to misfortunes of birth and training, could not appreciate the position he held at home. As he felt himself unable to explain it with any degree of precision, he acquiesced in their ignorance with the good-humoured tolerance of a young prince in disguise. He had read his *Murray* in a good many historic localities, could find his way, with a sense of old acquaintance, through the streets of Paris, and would have been greatly surprised if any one had told him that he was more countrified than his second-cousin, Tiny Vivian, who had never crossed the Channel and had only enjoyed an occasional week in town. It was true, nevertheless. Tiny, with her bright innocent brown eyes and eager youthfulness, was so evidently undeveloped that it was impossible to classify her. The budding plant might open in the old garden where it had grown, or might be transferred to a conservatory to blossom more delicately there. But Frank had carried that slight rusticity of his to two or three European capitals, and brought it back to the peaceful English home, where the rooks were cawing in the elms outside his windows, and the doves cooing in the tangled copses.

Mrs. Leicester went back to her easy-chair when Frank and Tiny had left her that afternoon, and gave herself up to drowsy meditation. "A matchmaker, indeed!" she said to herself, as she leaned back, suffering her knitting and her plump white hands to lie idly in her lap. "As if I shouldn't make a match for Frank, if I did for anybody! And no one can say I ever tried that." It was quite true. Mrs. Leicester had perceived that important young men were fatally apt to fall in love in a wrong, or, which was much the same thing, in an eccentric fashion, and she had determined that if Frank would but choose some one fairly unobjectionable she would ask no more. Hitherto, in spite of many little flirtations, he had escaped the snares laid for him at garden-parties and county balls, and had returned from all his wanderings apparently unscathed. So far as he showed any real preference it was for Tiny Vivian, who received his attentions in a very guileless and simple manner. It would be great promotion for Tiny to be mistress of the old Manor House, which was a paradise to her girlish fancy, but Frank's mother was quite ready to welcome her there, and was very good meanwhile in the matter of invitations. Mrs. Leicester was an amiable, kindly, easy-going woman, and was really fond of the girl, yet in her fierce motherly fondness she would have sacrificed her any day, body and soul, for Frank. Tiny must take care of herself. If Frank wanted her, well and good, but if the young prince should chance to discover a more suitable princess elsewhere, his little cousin must go back to her own people, heart-whole or heart-broken as she might chance to be.

Mrs. Leicester's thoughts turned from Frank and Tiny to her expected visitors, and drifted idly in the past, to which they belonged. How well she remembered the dull autumn afternoon when Caroline came in to tell her that Gilbert South was gone, and how he had done his best to pre-

Digitized by Google

serve a manly demeanour to the last. "Poor boy! poor boy! I only hope Mildred Fairfax will be true to him," said the kindly, sentimental Caroline, while her eyes filled at the thought of his sorrow. The sisters were excited over the love story, but naturally it failed to interest the fretful little tyrant who had the measles. Poor Aunt Carrie had to wipe her eyes and relate a wonderful story about soldiers who went away in ships, but who were all coming home again very soon. Mildred Fairfax was not required in Frank's version of the romance. Aunt Carrie told no more stories, she was dead before the young lover reached India, and Mrs. Leicester, looking back across the long years which parted her from her favourite sister, felt a mournful pleasure in taking up the unfortunate love story of whose earliest beginning she had been the confidante. She had a vague feeling that it might please Carrie if she could give Gilbert South a chance of being happy after the fashion that Carrie had planned so long ago. It was a late and unsatisfactory conclusion, perhaps, yet the best that she could see, and there was a sentimental charm about it which appealed to Mrs. Leicester's easily touched feelings; so she sat in her easy-chair, thinking it all over, till the figures of the old story—Caroline, Gilbert South, and Mildred Austin—came and went in something of a confused and softened vision before her half-closed eyes, while the window near which she sat became a great sunset picture of darkly towering trees and yellow sky. The sound of wheels passed through her pleasant dream, which was hardly so much dispersed as a little more defined when Mr. South stood on the hearth-rug where Frank had stood a couple of hours earlier. He spoke in soft deliberate tones, and looked round the room with a covert inquiry in his glance.

Mrs. Leicester made an effort, and was glad that he had had a pleasant drive. "You find me all alone," she said; "Frank is out somewhere, and so is Miss Vivian, who is staying with us. They were playing lawn-tennis all the morning, and they have been walking all the afternoon."

Mr. South expressed his admiration of such unflagging energy. "It wouldn't suit me," said Mrs. Leicester, candidly; "but I have a sort of recollection that when I was young I used to think I would run about all my life."

"Ah, when one was young!" said Gilbert South, with a smile. "And so you are all alone?" he repeated, still looking round with questioning eyes.

Mrs. Leicester awoke to a sudden comprehension of her companion's anxiety. "I shouldn't have been alone long, even if you hadn't come," she said. "I am expecting Mrs. Austin—I told you she was coming, if you remember. She was obliged to put her visit off for a few days, and she arranged to come this very afternoon—in fact, I have sent to meet her."

"How does she come, then? By a later train? You need not have sent twice, Mrs. Leicester—I would have waited."

"Oh, no, it's the other line. I am expecting her every minute. You

Digitized by Google

have been running a race without knowing it, and you have won, you see. I thought she would have been here first. She has been with friends in Cornwall."

"In Cornwall!" Gilbert South repeated the words with a touch of startled interest in his voice. "She used to live in Cornwall—I was there one summer a long while ago. I wonder where she has been staying now?" And, after a moment, he added, "Not in the old house, I know."

"It's a beautiful county," said Mrs. Leicester. "Not pretty, like Devonshire, of course."

"No, not like Devonshire, but I like it better, perhaps because I knew it first. The Land's End on a still midsummer day——" He stopped short in the middle of his speech, and looked down, but his silence was full of remembrance.

"Oh, delightful!" said Mrs. Leicester, fanning herself slowly with a Japanese fan. "Do I hear the carriage? No. Of all places I think the Land's End——" and she glided through two or three soft commonplace sentences.

"Yes," Gilbert interrupted her. "I beg your pardon, I mean I think you do hear ——."

"Why, of course I do!" There was the sound of an arrival in the hall. Mrs. Leicester put down her fan, but the door at the far end of the room was thrown open before she could reach it, and "Mrs. Austin" was announced. "Here you are at last!" she exclaimed, hurrying to meet the new comer.

Mrs. Austin bent her head to receive her friend's kiss of welcome, and the two came up the room with a soft rustle of drapery. The western sun lit up Mrs. Austin's pale face. "You know Mr. South?" said Mrs. Leicester, and with a smile she answered, "Oh yes," and put out a gloved hand. He was cool enough usually, but his heart beat fast, and he hardly knew what he said, as he stepped out of a long vista of shadowy years and a confusion of memories to greet Mrs. Austin, newly arrived from a Cornwall, whose sunsets, blue seas, and fringe of chafing white waves were those of a summer long gone by. It was only when she said, "Yes, it is a long while ago," that he remembered what his own remark had been.

At that same moment Tiny Vivian, a dainty little rustic figure, swinging a bunch of pale honeysuckle and green-coated nuts, was crossing the corner of a distant field. She had gone some way in silence, with thoughts intent upon the romance awaiting her at the Manor House. It is true that to Tiny it was a dim and bygone affair, which had been laid by so long that it could have no better sweetness than that of dried rose-leaves and lavender, yet being a real romance it was interesting, and it was with an absorbed and earnest glance that she looked up at Frank, and said, "I wonder how those two will meet. Don't you think she will feel rather strange?"

Digitized by Google

"Why she more than he?" demanded Frank. "I should think they would both feel rather queer after eighteen years." He aimed a blow at a thistle as he went by. "I've been thinking," he said with a laugh, "it must be eighteen years ago, if it isn't nineteen, since I had the measles. I was a horrid little spoilt wretch, I know—I remember crying because I couldn't go to a children's party—I used to wear a hideous tartan frock with frills, and had my hair curled. It is certainly eighteen years ago this autumn."

Tiny laughed too. "I suppose I was a baby—my birthday is in August, you know. Isn't it a long while ago? But if he has been waiting all these years, and been true all the while, he has nothing to be ashamed of."

"Might be ashamed of wasting his time, I should think," said Frank. "Don't bestow too much sympathy on Mr. South. And you expect Mrs. Austin to blush for her inconstancy? Not she! I'll bet you anything you like that the faithless widow is much the cooler of the two, and if there is any blushing when they meet, he'll have to do it."

"The sunset is doing it," said Tiny. "Look what a glow there is dying away behind those willows."

"We must look sharp," said Frank. He glanced at his watch and quickened his pace. "You can walk a little faster?"

"Oh, yes—are we far from home?" and without waiting for an answer Tiny went on. "I've made up my mind, I sha'n't like Mrs. Austin." There was a determined expression in her brown eyes as she spoke.

"Sorry for her," said young Leicester. "But, to tell you the truth, if it wasn't for pleasing my mother, I could very well dispense with the pair of them. I suppose he'll like some shooting; but I can't go out with him to-morrow—I've promised to ride over to Bridge End in the afternoon. I don't know what you'll all do, I'm sure—go for a drive, if you like."

Tiny pushed out a scornful little lower lip. "All packed in the carriage together!" Then, after a moment's consideration, "Well, we might go to the Castle."

"Isn't it rather reckless, using up our one show place the first day?" said Frank. "Though, to be sure, it isn't worth keeping—there's so very little of it."

"And don't you think it might harmonise nicely with their feelings?" Tiny continued, taking a higher range. "Won't they like to poke about little old remains of something that used to be very beautiful and splendid? I should think it would give them a chance of saying all sorts of things."

"Oh, go to the Castle—go to the Castle, by all means!" said Frank, laughing. "I only hope they'll have your fine sense of harmony, and make the most of the opportunity. Mind you don't interfere—that's all."

"I shall take care of your mother," Tiny answered loftily. "I shall

Digitized by Google

carry her shawl. And I shall pick ivy-leaves off the wall. I hope I know my duty."

"Most people do," said Frank, drily. "For instance, our duty is to be home in proper time to receive these good folks."

"Sha'n't we do it?" said the girl, a little apprehensively.

He shook his head. "No, like most people, we sha'n't! Can you dress in two minutes? You must try to-night, I'm afraid. It's all my fault; the time slipped away and I didn't notice." Tiny, in spite of her uneasiness, was very happy. They hurried on: the glow in the west grew fainter, and the rooks went by in great clouds, cawing their good-nights overhead.

"I can't think what possessed my mother to want these people!" said Frank, with a sudden outburst of irritation, as he helped Tiny over a stile. "I hate having to hurry you like this—you'll be tired out, thanks to them!"

"Oh, never mind me!" said Tiny, breathless but loyal.

"But I do mind you," Frank answered hotly. "I wish they were a thousand miles away! Anyhow their touching meeting must be over by now."

He was right, the meeting was over, and, as he had divined, Mrs. Austin had been the more unmoved of the two. While she shook hands with Gilbert South she did not cease to answer Mrs. Leicester's hospitably anxious questions. She was not tired—her train was rather late, yes, but she really was not tired—she would not have any tea—no, she would not have anything. Gilbert looked at her over the top of Mrs. Leicester's head. There was something of doubt, appeal, almost of entreaty in his glance, and Mrs. Austin did not seem to evade it, yet he hardly knew whether it had reached her or not. At that moment he felt it harder to realise how he had parted from Mildred Fairfax than it had been when he stood on the rug and listened through Mrs. Leicester's talk for the sound of approaching wheels. Mrs. Austin's softly-modulated and unhurried speech was like and yet unlike Mildred's voice as he remembered it. It seemed like an echo of old days awakened in a strange place. She looked at him with gently inquiring eyes, as if to discover how much he had changed since their parting, and she met the same mute questioning from him. Meanwhile Mrs. Leicester wondered aloud, with much discomposure, what Frank and Tiny could possibly have done with themselves. It was getting late: would Mrs. Austin like to go to her room? So the little party broke up, to meet again at seven.

The question which troubled Frank's mother was solved when, at three minutes to dinner-time, she met him on the stairs, looking very hot and dusty. She expressed some views on the subject of punctuality which seemed to make him hotter. "We went farther than I intended—we went along the river after I saw Huntley, and had to hurry back. What's the use of making a row about it?" he said rather crossly.

"You promised me you wouldn't be late!"

Digitized by Google

"Well, don't I tell you we hurried home? I believe Tiny nearly ran all the way. I wish I'd made her take it easy, if this is all the thanks we are to get." Frank had the disgusted look of a man who faces an ungrateful world.

"Where is Tiny?"

"Gone upstairs like a flash of lightning. Look here, mother, it wasn't her fault, you know."

"Well; all I can say is that it's very tiresome," said poor Mrs. Leicester. "Do make haste, Frank."

"I'm only waiting till you've done talking to me," Frank replied with boyish doggedness, and stood stock still with his hands in his pockets. Mrs. Leicester uttered an impatient exclamation, and flounced down to the drawing-room, whereupon Frank went up the stairs two at a time, narrowly escaping a meeting with a very cool and carefully-dressed gentleman who was just coming from his room. He made the most of his time, but it was a heavy-browed and rather sullen young host who made his appearance some minutes after dinner was announced, and offered his arm to Mrs. Austin with a muttered apology. Frank was profoundly dissatisfied with his guests and himself. People who were busy with their love affairs while he was a tiresome little boy getting over the measles, belonged altogether to a peculiarly uninteresting past, and the consciousness that he had been wanting in politeness made him angrily uneasy. He made up his mind about Mrs. Austin and Mr. South between his spoonfuls of soup. There was a slight likeness between them at the first glance. It was hardly enough to suggest the idea of brother and sister, but they might have been cousins. They were both tall, fair, and pale; they were very quiet, and when they spoke, it was with a subdued clearness of tone and with a little more finish than Frank himself. The resemblance made them still more uninteresting, and the soft voices struck him as slightly affected. So far as they were concerned, he saw precisely the pair of faded lovers he was prepared to see, but he noticed that Tiny, whose cheeks were a little flushed and whose pulses were a little quickened by their haste and her fear of his mother's displeasure, looked peculiarly vivid and young by the side of the new comers. There was something happy and eager in her utterance of the most commonplace remarks which Frank had not observed before. Cross though he was, he flashed an occasional glance of sympathy and encouragement to his fellow-culprit when he chanced to encounter her bright timid eyes. He would not have Tiny scolded for that afternoon's misconduct, and he watched his mother's manner so jealously that when Mrs. Austin said something about Culverdale, and the road by which she had come, he was preoccupied, and answered rather at random. She turned away with a hardly perceptible smile, and spoke to Gilbert South.

It was a little better when the ladies left the dining-room, for Frank contrived to exchange a smile of reconciliation with his mother as he

Digitized by Google

held the door, and so went back to his duty with a somewhat brighter face. But it was not much better. These people were not to his taste. They had the air of having seen and known things beyond the range of Culverdale society, and Frank felt shy, young, and half defiant as he sat over his wine with Gilbert South. He suspected his guest of possibly laughing at his youth and awkwardness. It is true that there was nothing in Mr. South's manner to justify the suspicion. He did not look like a man who was in the habit of laughing at his neighbours; but Frank was in an unreasonable mood that evening. He held himself aloof when they went into the drawing-room, still with that heavy consciousness of inhospitable manners upon him, and suffered Mr. South to ask Tiny to sing, and to go to the piano, talk over the songs, and turn the pages for her, while he sat by the table, holding a paper which he did not read.

And then in a moment all was changed—Frank himself—the whole world. Mrs. Austin rose from her seat by Mrs. Leicester, came out of the shadows into the mellow lamplight, and walked to the piano. She simply crossed the room, with the light shining on her pale, beautiful face, as if she were drawn softly by the music. She was utterly unconscious of Frank, who lifted his head from his hand and sat gazing at her, astonished and spell-bound, seeing her for the first time. He had been too sulky and absorbed to pay any attention before; he had had her hand on his arm—fool that he was!—and had taken no heed. Now as she went by it was like a wonderful revelation, and with a perception which to his own consciousness was singularly quickened, he noted every detail of the picture—the delicate features, the soft fine hair, the shadowy eyelids, the lips parted a little in a lingering smile, the hand that drooped and held a fan, the dusky softness of her trailing velvet gown, and the web of yellowish lace at her throat, with a white spark of diamond light in it. It was not such beauty as Frank had ever taken pleasure in, or even recognised, before, and for that very reason he was unable to set any limit to his admiration. The charm was that of a pale gleam in an unknown sky, revealing a new world. He was startled at the sudden rush of feeling which carried him out of the narrow boundaries within which he had been eating, drinking, and sleeping till that moment. It seemed to him as if none of the thoughts and words to which he had been accustomed in that earlier life would serve him now. He had scorned poetry as something foolish and unreal; but it struck him that if he took up a volume of poetry he might chance to find it all coming true. Something wonderful, inexplicable, unforeseen had befallen him in that brief minute; but the important events of life may very well happen in a minute which often goes unrecognised. Frank, however, recognised his as it went by.

He moved a little as he sat, to command a better view of the room, and saw how South, who was stooping to untie a portfolio of Tiny's, rose with a swift glance of welcome as Mrs. Austin approached, and silently

Digitized by Google

gave her a chair. She laid her hand on the back, but paused, listening. Looking eagerly at the two as they stood side by side, Frank forgot that he had ever seen a resemblance between them, and would have taken it as an insult if any one had suggested that such a resemblance existed. The secret love story, over which he had laughed that afternoon, rose up terribly before his eyes. He remembered every word he had said, how he had proposed to give them their wedding-breakfast, and how he had joked with Tiny about the elderly bride. He hated himself as he recalled the word. Of course, it had been nothing but a joke; Frank knew well enough that a woman who was a girl eighteen years earlier was not elderly; but still he had used it, and the blood rushed to his forehead at the recollection. It was such a detestable word, hard, prosaic, and commonplace; it seemed to vulgarise and spoil whatever it touched. Frank would readily have sacrificed a year of his life (which at his age means that he would have consented to be a year younger) could he have unsaid that hateful word "elderly." His meditations speedily became so unendurable that, in sheer despair, he got up and went towards the piano. Anything was better than sitting there alone, with an idiotic paper in his hand, which would not distract his attention for a moment, and his thoughts full of the remembrance that he had made fun of Mrs. Austin.

It was with a singular sensation of being at once very dull and clumsy and curiously keen-sighted that he approached his guests. For the first time in his life he understood that real life could be dramatic, since hitherto he had supposed that novels and plays were interesting simply because of their unreality. To say that a thing was like a play, meant that it was unlike anything which would really happen to a sensible Englishman. He had not sufficient imagination to enter into the feelings of the people who came and went about him. Long habit might teach him something of their likes and dislikes, hopes and fears, but he had little or no instinct in such matters, and consequently saw nothing beneath the every-day aspect of life. That night, however, his mother's reminiscences had given him a clue to the deeper meaning of what was passing under his roof, and with that secret knowledge of Mrs. Austin and Mr. South he grasped the situation as if it were on the stage. He saw it as if it were on the stage, but he knew that he was more than a spectator.

Tiny was singing, and Frank halted a little way off, as if to listen. He had never felt so shy and ill at ease in all his life; never felt so little at home as he did standing there in the Manor House drawing-room, in the very heart of his kingdom. Of course, he knew well enough that he was the master of Culverdale, but he did not see that Culverdale had anything to do with this matter. In fact, for the first time in his life, he was profoundly dissatisfied with Culverdale; it was a hole of a place to live in—it had no capabilities. How should they amuse Mrs. Austin? She had been everywhere, she would be bored, she would laugh at it. It

Digitized by Google

was all very well for Tiny, but Mrs. Austin was very different. They might have company, might "call the neighbours in," as the old nursery rhyme has it; but all the neighbours were bores. Frank had not discovered the fact before, but he perceived it now in the light of Mrs. Austin's presence, and reflected that a dinner party of twenty-bore power would not mend matters much.

Tiny's song came to an end, and Frank awoke to the consciousness that he was looking straight at Mrs. Austin in his perplexity.

"Something makes you very grave, Mr. Leicester," she said, with a slight smile.

"I—I was thinking." And Frank fairly stammered over this brilliant reply.

"So deeply that it was a shame to interrupt you."

"No, no, not at all. In fact I was thinking—I was afraid you would find this place very stupid—I was wondering what we could do that you would like."

"You were thinking about *that?*" Mrs. Austin, who had thought Frank very boyish and sulky at dinner, looked up at him now with sudden interest. She was surprised and a little touched, for there was no mistaking Frank's sincerity. "But, Mr. Leicester," she said, "there is no occasion for this terrible anxiety. I assure you I'm not a difficult person to amuse. What made you think I was?"

"No; I didn't think it," said Frank. "But if there is nothing at all, how then?"

"Come, it isn't so bad as that. There must be some walks, for instance."

"Oh, well, yes, there are some walks," Frank admitted, rather grudgingly. "I didn't know whether you would care for walks."

"Yes, in moderation. Not what you call walking, I daresay. And drives?"

"Yes," he said, "you can drive as much as ever you like; only I don't exactly know what there is to drive to."

"You are not encouraging," said Mrs. Austin, with a little laugh.

"There *is* a ruin," said Frank. "Tiny and I were thinking that perhaps you would like to go to-morrow afternoon, if it is fine. But it is nothing of a place," he continued, fixing his brown eyes despondently on the floor, as if he saw the whole thing in the compass of an Indian rug.

"Ruined too much, or not ruined enough?" she inquired.

"Oh, ruined quite enough—too much if anything."

"I like a neglected ruin; I hate restorations. I am sure I shall like to see this one," said Mrs. Austin graciously. "And what is this building, or rather, what was it?"

"Well," Frank replied, "it's a bit of a little tower—Culverdale Castle some people call it." (He had invariably called it so himself till that evening.) "Perhaps," he added, with a fine irony, for he was growing more fluent, "it might have been the fashion to have your castles small when this one was built; or perhaps it wasn't quite full

Digitized by Google

grown when it began to fall to pieces—I don't know. But Culverdale *Castle*—O Lord!" Frank's tone, as he spoke of his little ruin, conveyed contemptuous disgust, as if it were no more than a decayed tooth.

Mrs. Austin slowly turned a ring on her finger. "I don't know that I'm so very particular about the size of my ruins," she said; "some people are, I believe. I remember going once to see the remains of a Roman villa with some friends. I think they expected to find it standing up with a knocker on the door, and they were very much disappointed; in fact, they said it was a swindle. I won't say your ruin is a swindle, Mr. Leicester, especially after all your warnings."

"You may if you like," said Frank, gloomily. "I think myself a thing ought to be a decent size. What did you say just now, that you didn't like 'em restored?"

"No, I don't. Why? Has this been restored?"

He shook his head. "It's all right, then. I only thought that if you would have liked a little more of it, I might have gone over to-morrow with a hod of mortar and a barrow-load of stones and done it up for you. Only then you couldn't have driven there till Saturday."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Austin, smiling, "I think I would rather go to-morrow, and see it as it is."

"Well—only you won't expect anything, will you?"

"No, I won't. Do you always depreciate Culverdale and everything belonging to it in this fashion?"

The point-blank question, asked in the quietest of tones, was not easy to answer. "I don't know; not particularly," said the disingenuous young man. "It does well enough for me, you know."

"I suspect it would do well enough for a good many people," Mrs. Austin replied. "That was rather a pretty road I came by from the station this afternoon—you shall not run everything down so unmercifully." Frank coloured with pleasure to hear her defending Culverdale. He felt as if she were taking his part against himself. "And, by the way," she went on, "there is one thing I want to see which you do not propose to show me, apparently."

Frank emerged from the depth of his despair. "What is that—tell me?"

"Why," said Mrs. Austin, "I want you to show me over your house. I am sure you have all manner of delightful old things stored away here. I caught sight of a lovely old carved cupboard at the top of the stairs, as I came down, which looked as if it ought to be a perfect mine of wealth."

"What sort of old things?" Frank inquired anxiously. "Old china, do you mean, and pictures, and old work—do you care for them?"

"Why, yes; don't we all care for them nowadays?" said Mrs. Austin, with something which, though hardly so much as a smile, was like soft sunshine while she spoke. "I'm not conspicuously behind the age, Mr. Leicester—I'm very like other people."

"That I don't believe," muttered Frank, under his breath. It was

Digitized by Google

doubtful whether his companion caught the words or not. Her eyes rested on him with a faintly inquiring expression, and he went on hurriedly, "Let me show you, then. You shall see all that there is."

"That will be very good of you. I should like it very much. I suppose you know everything in the house by heart?" said Mrs. Austin, furling and unfurling her fan, and looking up kindly at Frank.

"All those things? No, indeed I don't," the young man answered, half laughing and half confused. "I know there are a lot of old pictures and heirlooms about the place. I've always been meaning to learn all about them, but I never have. But I'll find out," he added courageously.

"It doesn't sound as if you would be a very trustworthy guide."

"Oh, try me first!" he exclaimed. "Then when you have exhausted my stock of information you can have somebody else who knows more; and then——"

"And then?" she repeated when he paused.

"Why," said Frank, blushing like a shy schoolboy, "then I think you had better teach me."

Mrs. Austin looked at him smilingly. "It would only be common gratitude, would it?" she said.

"It is a bargain, then," he urged. "But when? Candle-light isn't any good, you know. Will to-morrow morning do?"

She answered that to-morrow morning would suit her perfectly, and looked past Frank in a way that made him turn and discover Mr. Gilbert South at his elbow, smiling agreeably, and holding a piece of music. He promptly announced the nature of his errand.

"Miss Vivian has sent me to ask if you will sing this with her."

Frank hesitated; looking at the song, at Mr. South, at Tiny, who from her music-stool surveyed the scene, and waited the result of her embassy.

"Pray do," said Mrs. Austin. "Especially as I see that Miss Vivian has chosen a song which happens to be a favourite of mine."

"All right," said Frank, and taking it from Mr. South, he went to the piano. He had had his back to Tiny during his talk, and now that he walked towards her it was with a clouded face. He had suddenly recollected that there was no occasion for *him* to amuse Mrs. Austin. South had been invited on purpose to do that. "I daresay she was wishing for him all the time!" thought Frank, with a bitter throb of jealousy. "Well, I don't care; I'll show her the house to-morrow. It's my house—it's all I have, and I will have that, at any rate! And he shan't come with us either; the others can take him round, if they like."

"Aren't you very grateful?" said Tiny, in a whisper, looking up at him with a sunny little face, and arching her delicate brows as if to point the question. "*I* saw how good you were, and I knew how you must hate it."

"Your eyes are very sharp," Frank replied.

Digitized by Google

She nodded. "Oh, but it wasn't only then," she said, setting up the music before her, and flattening the page with a touch of her soft little brown hand. "I looked at you at dinner-time, and I saw you didn't like her. I can always tell whether you like people or not."

"Can you? What do you think if I behave to anybody just as I do to you?"

"I shall not answer that question," said Tiny, firmly. "You seem to have forgotten that we are never to talk about anybody but people in general, and you didn't behave to her just as you do to me, so that has nothing whatever to do with it. Do you know, I think I have had the best of it this evening? I said I shouldn't like her, and I don't; but he is rather nice."

"Rather nice, is he?"

"Yes," Tiny answered, "he is. Now are you ready?"

Mrs. Austin, listening to her young friend's performance, decided that he had a pleasant voice, sadly in want of a little training. "Do you sing now?" she asked Gilbert South.

The 'now' marked a remembrance that he sang of old. "Not to-night," he answered hastily; "to-morrow, perhaps."

"Dear me! Everything seems to be for to-morrow," said Mrs. Austin, leaning back in her chair and looking down.

"I should rather have said that everything had been yesterday," South answered in a low voice.

"To-day comes off badly either way," she rejoined lightly, but without raising her eyes. "It generally does, I think."

He fancied there was a touch of mockery in her tone, but he could not be sure. "Do not say anything against to-day," he said; "I have looked forward to it for a long while."

"Ah, then you are sure to be disappointed!"

"Am I disappointed?" said Gilbert. "That is what I want to know." He turned quickly to the piano. "Thank you; that is a charming song." He went back to Tiny Vivian, while Mrs. Austin, softly murmuring her thanks, rose and returned to Mrs. Leicester, who roused herself from a state of drowsy contentment to entertain her.

Frank had no further opportunity that evening. Perhaps had one presented itself he would hardly have taken advantage of it. When the party separated for the night he lingered at the door, and caught a glimpse of Mrs. Austin going up the shallow steps of polished oak, and that moment taught him that his old staircase was a fitting background for a picture. Coming back, he took up his accustomed position on the hearth-rug, so absorbed in his own thoughts that he seemed almost sullen. He was glad that Mr. South was tired, and would not stay to smoke and talk. He bade Tiny a brief good-night; he stood looking heavily at his mother as she wandered about the room, gathering up her scattered possessions.

"You don't like these people, do you?" she said.

Digitized by Google

Frank muttered something to the effect that South was well enough.

"No, but you don't like them. I didn't much suppose you would; but I thought you wouldn't mind for once. We don't often have any body you don't like."

"All right," said Frank. "I didn't complain, did I?"

"No; and it was very nice of you to go and talk to Mildred Austin this evening. You did go and talk to her? I didn't dream it, surely? I was half asleep, I think."

"Yes; I talked to her."

"And you know it is only for poor Carrie's sake—just a fancy of mine. It won't be for long, Frank."

"No," said Frank, "I don't at all suppose it will be for long."

"Mildred was always considered very good-looking," Mrs. Leicester remarked in a musing tone, standing still with a work-basket in her hand. "Of course, she has gone off a good deal—though really not so much as one might have expected—since I first knew her. But I know she isn't your style of beauty, even if she were not elderly, as you and Tiny were saying this afternoon. Oh, you young folks!" And Mrs. Leicester ended her sentence with a good-humoured chuckle of reminiscence.

There was a pause before Frank opened his lips. Since the time was just long enough to permit of making an appeal to high Heaven, it may be hoped that it was so employed. "I'm sure I never said she was my style," he answered, and added in a lower voice, "I know very well she isn't!" And with that he turned on his heel and went away to bed.

It was evident that young Leicester might dream his new dream with little fear of discovery, unless Gilbert South should detect his secret. Mrs. Leicester and Tiny Vivian had both perceived that Frank did not like Mrs. Austin. Tiny, being keener sighted than the elder lady, might possibly reconsider the matter; but such a conviction is not lightly set aside. Life is long enough for many changes; but it is not long enough to allow of our recognising many changes in our friends. Having once settled what they must be (which is easily done, since there is but one really complicated human being in the world), it is obviously necessary that they should always be what we have determined they are. How otherwise could we go through life with any feeling of security? It would be little less intolerable than if the hills and valleys, fields and highroads around us, should shift about and journey in different directions, under a sky whose stars were playing hide and seek with the astronomers.

II.

If Frank had discovered Mrs. Austin's supreme loveliness and charm in the soft lights and shadows of the evening, it was appropriately reserved for Mrs. Austin to perceive that the morning was the time which best suited her young host. If Mr. South, and perhaps Mrs Austin

Digitized by Google

herself, should chance to be a little pale and languid, a little conscious of a shadowy past,

> Clouding o'er the new-born day
> With regrets of yester-morn,

a little disinclined to recommence the monotonous journey from dawn to dusk, which after all seemed to lead to nothing very splendid, one would have said that Frank Leicester was alive and glad with all the life and gladness of the newly-wakened world. He was not in the breakfast-room when Mrs. Austin came down, but, before she had well answered Mrs. Leicester's questions about her night's rest, she heard that he had been out and about for a couple of hours. "He was here a minute or two ago," said Tiny Vivian, herself a radiant, bright-eyed, early riser, "he will be back directly. He only went into the garden." And as the words were uttered Mrs. Austin looked out, and saw Frank emerging from an opening in the tall yew hedge which bounded the view on one side, and coming up the path, with the sunshine glistening on the short waves of his brown hair, and his dog leaping at his lifted hand. If there was a touch of something rustic about Frank, it was an unmixed charm just then, as he opened the glass door and stepped in, fresh as if he had been steeped to the heart in the air and sunshine of "the country green." He brought a breath of the sweet morning with him, telling how he had brushed through leafy ways and looked across his level meadows before his guests were ready to lift their tired heads from their pillows. He had gone to bed with a heavy heart, but he came forward now, happy and hopeful in spite of himself, and prodigiously hungry.

Breakfast over, Mrs. Leicester excused herself on the plea of orders to give to the housekeeper. "That means an hour's gossip," said Frank to a family portrait.

"It means your dinner, you ungrateful boy," Mrs. Leicester replied as she opened the door.

There was a brief silence after her departure. The four who remained, and whose duty it was to amuse and to be amused, seemed a little uncertain how to set about it. Tiny was the first to make an effort. A suggestive remark, aimed at Mr. South, brought him to her side where she stood at the window, a dialogue on gardens followed as naturally as possible, and in less than five minutes the pair were setting out to study the example which lay before them, basking in the yellow September sunshine. Mrs. Austin, meanwhile, was glancing over the *Times*, and young Leicester, as he leaned against the chimney-piece, pencilled figures on the back of an envelope, and added or subtracted in a curiously haphazard fashion. He never once looked at Mr. South and Tiny, and Tiny was apparently unconscious that Mrs. Austin and he were still alive. When the couple were fairly gone, and the sound of their footsteps and voices had died away, Frank drew a long breath, glanced at his bit of paper as if he did not think much of arithmetic in

Digitized by Google

general, tore it across, and stood waiting his companion's pleasure and reflecting on the advantages of early rising.

While Mrs. Austin was yet half asleep, Frank and Tiny had held a consultation on the lawn, under the tulip trees. Starting from the ascertained fact of his dislike to the strangers, it struck Tiny as very nice of him to say that he would show Mrs. Austin round the house after breakfast. But, knowing that even Frank was mortal, she was not surprised that he set a limit to his self-sacrifice. "Look here, Tiny, I can't stand both of them," he had said. "You'll have to take your friend South away somewhere. You like him best, you say—well, I don't. Besides, I expect I shall have enough of him to-morrow. Take him round the grounds, can't you?" And when Tiny hazarded a smiling reference to the story they had heard the day before, he stopped her rather abruptly. "Oh, let my mother mind her own matchmaking—it's no concern of ours. We've only got to keep the secret. And don't you see, Tiny, it would look very queer if you and I walked off and left them to themselves?" Tiny saw that. "They'll have time enough and to spare," said Frank, finally.

"So they will," she assented. "This afternoon, when you are out of the way."

"Yes," said Frank, gazing intently at a weed in the turf, "they'll have this afternoon." And so it happened that, while the afternoon was reserved for Gilbert South, Frank had the morning.

"Are you inclined to have a look round the place?" he inquired in a meek voice, when Mrs. Austin seemed to have finished the *Times*. He waited for her answer with some anxiety. Suppose she should have changed her mind, or forgotten all about it! Experience, it is true, had taught him that women were flatteringly compliant when they had to deal with the young owner of Culverdale Manor. Frank's propositions were invariably applauded by his feminine listeners, and he knew very well that if he were to suggest to any girl in the neighbourhood that they should ascend Mount Everest together, she would say it was a delightful idea, and would take his arm to start off that moment. Frank had never found women capricious. Though he was as ready as any other man to say *Souvent femme varie*, in point of fact, in his little flirtations, it was always Mr. Francis Leicester who changed very quickly, and the girl who showed an unnecessary and sometimes reproachful constancy. According to experience, Frank should have had no misgivings when he reminded Mrs. Austin of her promise. But he instinctively felt that his experience was not likely to be of much service to him on this occasion. "You said you should like it—there isn't much to show you, but will you come?" he asked with simple directness.

Mrs. Austin looked up a little absently. Their talk of the evening before had not made a deep impression on her, and she had almost made up her mind to spend the morning in writing letters. When Frank spoke she had just reckoned up the most tiresome of her correspondents,

Digitized by Google

and had decided that she might hope to possess an easy conscience by luncheon-time. But as she met his eyes she remembered his anxiety to amuse her, and checked the answer which was on her lips. He was a nice hospitable boy, this son of Fanny Leicester's, and if he wanted to do the honours of his home he should have his way. Her letters could wait, and she would see Frank's old china in the morning and his little ruin in the afternoon.

"Will I come?" she repeated. "Of course I will come. I shall be delighted." And she rose instantly, with a sweet readiness which filled Frank's soul with a tumult of delight.

It was speedily obvious that the young man knew very little about the things he had undertaken to show. He was vaguely proud of his heirlooms because they were heirlooms.. It pleased him to think that he inherited as a matter of course what other people were so anxious to buy. His old oak had been carved for the Manor House, his old cups and dishes had belonged to generations of dead and gone Leicesters. That was enough for him. He remembered the names of a few of the portraits, and in one or two notable cases could even tell the artist, but his remarks as a rule were not instructive. "Oh, I recollect that one," he would say, with a glance of recognition, "used to hang in the little room out of the gallery upstairs," or it might be, "Do you see that queer old fellow up there? I remember I was awfully afraid of him when I was a little chap; I thought he walked." Sometimes he confined himself to a simple expression of opinion. "That's a comical get-up—doesn't she look as if she'd got a duster and a feather on her head? Do you suppose that's a cap, now, or a hat?" But, curiously enough, his ignorance did not affect Mrs. Austin unpleasantly. She did not feel as if Frank were an outsider, but rather as if the connection between him and the people on the walls was close enough to justify a disregard of mere book-knowledge about them. She could have learned more names and dates in a couple of days than Frank had acquired in his life, but he claimed kindred with the portraits in the very look and attitude with which he confronted them. There was a young squire of more than a century earlier who might have been his brother. Mrs. Austin called his attention to the likeness, and Frank, with his handsome head thrown back, stood gazing at him in a glow of suddenly-awakened friendliness. "I wonder who he was?" she said. "Suppose he turned out to be a namesake of yours?"

"I'm sure I don't know," the young fellow answered. "Is he really like me?" And, without waiting for her reply, he went on, "I'm idiotically ignorant."

"Don't call yourself names," said Mrs. Austin. "You certainly are ignorant, and it is very disgraceful, but I rather like it. People who know too much won't let one make any discoveries or imagine anything on one's own account. Now you leave me quite free in that respect."

Digitized by Google

Frank smiled somewhat ruefully. "If that is all you want, I am perfect."

They went upstairs, and there he had rather an easier part to play, as she could appreciate what she saw without his explanation. He was eager to fit keys into locks for her, and would readily have broken open any obstinate door which resisted his efforts. Certainly, if the future was to be for Gilbert South, the present time was Frank's, and he made good use of it, for before that journey of discovery was over, the house was peopled with beautiful memories. There was Mrs. Austin pausing at the top of the stairs, and smiling at a grotesque head which grinned from the door of an old cabinet—Mrs. Austin intent on a dingy bit of tapestry, and triumphantly discovering Rebekah at the well—Mrs. Austin laughingly putting him aside when he failed to unlock a great oak chest, and turning the key with her slim white fingers—Mrs. Austin looking out from an oriel window across the sunlit oaks and chestnuts of the park with a tranquil far-seeing gaze. There was more to remember of this, for in the act of turning away she stopped short, "Oh, there's some beautiful old china," she said, "I must have a look at that! Don't you care for these things, really, Mr. Leicester?"

"No,—I don't know—I mean Yes," said Frank. "Don't you think they are women's things?"

"Women's things? Don't be so scornful," said Mrs. Austin, with her quiet smile.

"That isn't scornful," he answered slowly. "I meant——" He paused, and looked at her, at the brown oak panelling behind her head, at the blue and white china, at her lifted hand as she put back a cup. The sunshine, slipping through the leaves which wavered outside, brightened the picture with capricious touches of gold.

"Well—you meant? I am waiting."

"Why," said Frank, "what good are these things to me? I don't understand 'em, you know. I can read the papers and go over my bailiff's accounts just as well without two blue plates and an old teapot in front of me. But when you stand there it's different—they seem to be all right somehow."

Mrs. Austin met his gaze with a little touch of laughter just at the corners of her mouth. "Upon my word!" she said, "I didn't know that I was in such perfect harmony with an old teapot. Well, it is something, no doubt, to be able to adorn the leisure moments of life—when the bailiff is away!" Frank would have protested, but she checked him with a quick little movement of her head. "Are you going to explain yourself? Don't—an explanation is enough to spoil the most beautiful thing that ever was said, and to make the worst worse. Besides, there is no need."

"No," he answered with a laugh, "I don't suppose there is."

Mrs. Austin ended by enjoying her morning in a very bright simple fashion, and feeling a little as if she and Frank were a couple of children

Digitized by Google

engaged in some delightful piece of mischief. Frank had certainly hampered a lock, broken a little saucer, lost one key on the floor of a dark cupboard, and mixed up the remainder in hopeless confusion. He knew there were some queer old dresses somewhere, he remembere having seen them as a boy, and in the search for them he took Mrs. Austin into all sorts of shadowy corners, and made interesting discoveries of old brooms and brushes and dusty books. On one shelf he found some toys, shabby with ill-usage and long neglect. He stood looking at these for a moment, bewildered to find that he had forgotten them so utterly and remembered them so well. He stooped to touch a little painted water-cart, and then shut them all into the darkness again with a lingering smile. At last he came upon the old brocades and laces of which he was in search, and looked anxiously to see whether they would please his companion. "Are they right!" he said, "or don't you care for them?" As soon as he was satisfied on this point, he would have tossed them all over the floor for her inspection, if she had permitted it. "Look like private theatricals, don't they?" he said when he was bidden to stand on one side.

"Oh, isn't this lovely?" she exclaimed, without heeding his question.

He considered the pale delicately-flowered silk with a puzzled face. "Lovely? Isn't it rather queer and—and—washy?" he said at last.

"Oh, that won't do at all!" Mrs. Austin replied, smiling up at him. "That isn't what we say about such things nowadays. We must educate you."

"Well," said Frank, with a flash of inspiration; "I think I should know better if I saw it on." Mrs. Austin shook it out daintily to let the light fall on it, and he looked from the silk to her face, and back again. All at once he seemed to see what she would look like in it; a tall slight figure in the quaint old gown. "Yes," he said, with sudden conviction, "I see now. It's beautiful."

"You are a promising scholar," she replied. "What were you saying about theatricals just now? But these things are too good for theatricals—too real for such little candle-light shams."

"Not a bit too good—if you would act!"

She shook her head. "Not even to wear this dress! Though that would be delightful."

"Do," said Frank. "Why not? I'd get myself up like my friend downstairs—the man over the library chimney-piece, you know. Would that be right with this of yours?"

It was Mrs. Austin's turn to call up a picture, and she raised her eyes to his face. "Oh, yes, I think so. We should be in the same half-century at any rate, quite near enough for private theatricals."

"Oh, I say!" Frank exclaimed. "Half a century!"

"Well, I admit it would be an awkward interval in real life," said Mrs. Austin, smiling. "But I think it might do on the stage."

"Let's try it," said Frank, with his face aglow.

Digitized by Google

"No," she answered very gently and decidedly. "Why not ask Miss Vivian?"

"Tiny!" The suggestion called him out of an enchanted world into his everyday existence, and he had to check himself lest he should say something ungracious.

"She would look charming in some of these things," said Mrs. Austin thoughtfully.

"I daresay she would—I mean, I'm sure she would. Well, we can think of that—any time."

"And do you think we can join the others—any time?" his companion inquired. "I should say we had better bring our investigations to an end, and look for them. Your mother will think we are lost."

Frank attempted no remonstrance; and she laid everything back in its place with a charming dexterity, only pausing once to look at some old lace. He watched her, still with the shadow on his face which had come when that mention of Tiny's name reminded him of more than Tiny.

They went downstairs, but could find no one. "My mother is having more than an hour's gossip to-day," said Frank. He turned to a side window and looked out. "And the others are playing lawn-tennis."

Mrs. Austin provided herself with a parasol, and they went across the lawn to find the players. Tiny Vivian had enjoyed her morning very well, though she had been conscious that Frank and Mrs. Austin were a long while going round the house. She had not, however, got beyond the feeling that it was very good of Frank, and she came to meet the pair with a bright face of welcome. "Coming to play?" she said gaily.

"All right," said Frank; and he turned to his companion, "You will, won't you?"

Mrs. Austin shook her head. "No—I can't play. No—don't offer to teach me—it's very kind of you, but I'm too old to begin now."

If he were disappointed, it was only for a moment, for in a moment he felt that he would rather not see Mrs. Austin rushing about after balls, eager, excited, flushed. Tiny might, of course, but not Mrs. Austin. "It isn't that!" he said, in answer to her smiling refusal. "You could learn anything you liked, but you are quite right—it would not be worth your learning." And he went away with long steps to fetch her a chair. When he came back, Gilbert South was describing something to Tiny in his soft voice, and Mrs. Austin stood a little apart, studying the old house with tranquil eyes.

Frank brought the chair, and an Indian shawl of his mother's which he had picked up in the hall. "Will you have this on?" he said. "No? Then I'll put it over the chair. It's a very ugly chair." Frank had never been in the habit of eyeing his furniture so discontentedly.

"It's very comfortable," said Mrs. Austin, giving a touch to his arrangement of the drapery which seemed to make it exactly right. "Now I won't keep you from your game."

Digitized by Google

"Look here, Frank," said Tiny, lightly touching his arm with her little sunburnt fingers; "leave me out this time. You play with Mr. South."

"No, no, Miss Vivian, that won't do," Gilbert protested. "You've been describing Mr. Leicester as a champion player, and I'm not going to be pitted against him for you to laugh at my clumsiness."

"You're not clumsy," Tiny replied, quite simply.

"Thank you," said South, with a little bow. "But I'm a beginner, you know, and you have undertaken my education. Suppose you let me learn a little by looking on."

"Come then, Tiny," said Frank. After all he had had his turn. It was only fair play to make way for the rival who was also his guest.

Gilbert strolled across to where Mrs. Austin sat, and threw himself on the grass at her feet. "Upon my word," he said, "I'm not sorry to rest a little. I've taken a good deal of exercise this morning!"

Mrs. Austin smiled, and watched the game, though she did not understand it sufficiently to appreciate Frank's skill. She was interested in the two agile figures merely as a picture—a pretty picture in the autumn sunshine. Gilbert, at her feet, leaning on his elbow, seemed as if he also were watching the two figures, but in reality his eyes were fixed upon a third, a tall slender girl, fair, graceful, swift, playing battledore and shuttlecock in the stillness of a summer evening, close by an old red-brick wall on which peaches were trained. Above the wall a thin rank of trees rose against a clear sky. There was an arch over the garden path, a tangle of climbing roses, delicate leaf-sprays, and clusters of loose white flowers, under which the girl would go when the game was over and the sun gone down. And beyond the buttressed wall, where the elm boughs were stirring in the cool evening air, was the great world, beginning at the ivy-grown garden gate and stretching away to unknown distances. To India, for instance, which lay waiting for a young fellow who was to do the most remarkable things. It was wonderful only to think of the sights he was to see, the strange faces, the strange skies, before he came home bronzed and bearded, to stroll once more along the grassy walks and find the clustered roses of a later year hanging white in the twilight. As he left the garden for the last time that home-coming had been almost as vivid and real as the tender pain of parting. Afterwards it faded away into a dim picture, sad as such pictures are when what was to have become an actual future is put aside and marked, "it might have been." But now while he lay on the turf, watching Tiny and Frank, it rose up before his eyes as clearly outlined as of old.

It could never be. The heads of the household were dead, the old home was broken up, the house was sold. Gilbert had a vague remembrance of having been told that a retired tradesman, who piqued himself on growing big pine-apples, had taken the place and improved it immensely. However long his life might last, it could never hold that

Digitized by Google

happy home-coming, as a hero, to the old garden, and the girl who was to wait for him there.

He raised himself a little, and turned to Mrs. Austin, who was leaning back against Frank's Indian shawl. "Do you remember," he said, "how we used to play battledore and shuttlecock at West Hill?"

She looked down at his uplifted face. "Yes," she answered, in her tranquil voice; "I remember." And after a just perceptible pause, she added, "perfectly."

That "perfectly" disconcerted him a little, and checked a sentence on his lips. As a rule it is not a perfect but a discriminating memory which we desire to find in our friends. Gilbert asked himself whether there was a touch of ironical meaning in her words, or only a frank simplicity. "It's a long while ago!" he said. It was a safe remark to make and not an original one. Yet something in his accent made it sound almost like an entreaty.

Mrs. Austin smiled. "It's a very long while ago. These young people were in the nursery then, I suppose, and now their turn has come round."

"Do we only have one turn?" said Gilbert, looking down and touching the end of the shawl which trailed on the short dry turf.

"Ah, that I can't say!" she answered lightly. "How can I tell what Fate may have in store for you? I fancy you are younger than I am now."

"No, no!" he exclaimed. "But tell me—am I much changed?"

Her eyes rested on him in smiling scrutiny. "No," she said; "I think you have changed very little indeed."

"You are right," he said, after a pause. "I am very little changed. And you?"

"What do you think?"

South quitted his lounging attitude and sat up. "That's a question I can't answer. You are changed, and yet I fancy you are not changed. You were only a girl, you know——"

"And now I'm an old woman!"

He winced as if the words hurt him. "Don't say that! Not even as a joke!"

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" she retorted. "I remember now I am a year and a half younger than you."

"Oh, you may call me what you like," said Gilbert. "I can assure you I feel old enough sometimes—detestably, flatly, hopelessly old!" He spoke quickly and passionately, the sunshine lighted his fair handsome features, and the description of himself which was absurd in connection with his actual years was rendered more obviously so by the fact that, apart from a certain expression of face, Gilbert South was a very young-looking man. He had the air of being conscious of every moment of his past life. One would have said that he continually "added up the mortal amount" of days, weeks, and years which he had spent on earth,

Digitized by Google

and carried the total in his weary thoughts. And all the time it seemed as if he only wanted a touch of something not easy to define, of hopefulness, perhaps, or passion, or even defiance, to make him as young as he was at five-and-twenty. It was hardly wanting as he turned to Mrs. Austin. "Say what you please of me! It doesn't matter. But don't say it of yourself. If *you* ——"

The sentence was never finished. "I believe those two are actually going to leave off playing," he said in a tone of gentle acquiescence in the decrees of destiny.

When the time came for the party to set out on their excursion to the Castle, Frank saw them off with an anxious solicitude for their comfort, which pleased his mother very much. Tiny, behind the scenes, remarked it too, and said to herself that Frank could afford to be very polite since he was going to get rid of his two bores for the whole afternoon. She liked the politeness none the less for her knowledge of her cousin's motive, and nodded him a bright farewell as she took her place in the carriage.

To the last moment young Leicester was apparently troubled with misgivings about his ruin. "You'll remember that it's a very little one," he said to Mrs. Austin, while his mother was arranging herself and her many shawls.

"Do you know that you are really heightening my expectations?" she replied. "When were you there last? I hope nobody has taken a fancy to it since then and put it in his pocket."

Frank laughed. "I hope not," he said. "Tiny can find it for you, if it's still there. She knows where to look for it."

"Where to look for what?" Mrs. Leicester inquired. "Wild flowers? We are quite ready, tell them, Frank." And they drove off.

As soon as they were beyond the park gates Mrs. Austin was called upon to admire the scenery. "Of course, we don't pretend to have any wonderful hills and rocks and waterfalls and things," said Mrs. Leicester. "But it is just the kind of landscape I like: so simple and English and home-like. Look at that bit of path and that stile, now—wouldn't it make a sweet little water-colour picture? With a pretty girl, you know, or an old woman in a red cloak."

It struck Mrs. Austin that the stile, or any number of stiles exactly like it, had been so wearisomely fitted with simpering rustics that the suggestion was unnecessary. Mrs. Leicester, however, obviously prided herself on the idea as an original one. "And I like this up and down much better than those very steep hills—they make such endless trouble with the horses," the good lady went on. She smiled kindly round on everything, and seemed to settle herself comfortably in the country as if it had been made to suit her. And indeed if it had been designed with that intention it would hardly have been different.

Mrs. Austin was civil though not enthusiastic in her reply. She would have preferred something wilder and more hilly; but, then, the

Digitized by Google

sleek chestnuts were not her horses. Or, failing that, she would have had the pretty little undulations, which pleased Mrs. Leicester, abolished altogether. She would have liked to drive swiftly forward over wide lonely levels with the great arch of sky overhead. She did not appreciate the carefully kept hedges, enclosing stubble and turnips, nor the prim little plantations which looked like preparatory schools for young trees, nor the small spire which rose with an air of the utmost decorum above a neat churchyard.

"There is Frank!" said Tiny Vivian.

They all turned to look at the distant figure, which Tiny, who knew the road that he would take, had recognised. Frank was seen for a moment on a gentle ascent and then lost behind a clump of trees, but the glimpse remained with Mrs. Austin as a little picture. She did not know why it was that the words "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow," came into her head as he rode away, but she realised all at once how precious the kindly, handsome, commonplace young fellow was in his own home. Mrs. Austin, as she sat absently looking at Frank's bit of road, was thinking of a baby's little grave, closed ten years earlier over a life too short to be borne in anybody's mind but hers. "The only son of his mother." And when she died the little memory could interest no one but the busy people who count up births and deaths and take pleasure in averages. Even for her it had no individuality that could be expressed in words, though she would not have parted with it for all that life could give.

Meanwhile the carriage rolled smoothly on, and she looked right and left at all the views that were pointed out to her, till Mrs. Leicester was able to announce, with proud excitement, "And there—no, not *there*—a little farther—no, that tree is in the way for a moment—there! *now* don't you see a bit of the Castle wall! Don't *you*, Mr. South? Just beyond the field where the cow is."

Two minutes later they pulled up by the roadside, at the point nearest to the ruins, and the party set out to walk the brief remainder of the way. There was no difficulty in finding the Castle. It stood, together with a small haystack, in the corner of a dreary little field, and consisted of part of a tower, a few scattered fragments of stone, and the broken remains of a bit of low wall. "No doubt," said Mrs. Leicester, "it once extended much farther, and was a magnificent building." She added dignity to the bit of wall by calling it the "rampart." South, who assented to all her views, called it so too, as soon as he found out what she meant, and delighted her by suggesting the possibility of discovering foundations with the help of a little judicious digging. The good lady sat down on a fallen stone to consider the idea, while he undertook to walk round the ruins and inspect them more thoroughly. For this purpose he joined the other two, who were gazing up at the tower. "I don't know anything about it except that it is very old," Miss Vivian was saying as he came up. She looked a little doubtfully at Gilbert, as

Digitized by Google

if she suspected him of possibly making fun of Culverdale Castle, which no one but Frank had any business to do, but after a minute she slipped quietly away and left him with Mrs. Austin.

"And what do you think of it?" he said.

She smiled. "Perhaps it would be more cheerful if there were more of it. It strikes me as the most melancholy little ruin I ever saw. It's a mercy the sun is shining."

"It *is* melancholy," he said, looking round at the flat green meadow. The tower was of a blackish grey, crusted with lichen; the grass at its foot and the spreading docks grew coarsely from the ill-drained soil, and a sluggish little stream crawled a little way off.

"People talk of fortresses frowning," said Mrs. Austin; "I think this would if it could. There's a touch of malice about it, though it is too petty to threaten."

"It isn't amiable-looking," said Gilbert, with an air of entire conviction. He knew what he was expected to say, though in truth he was not thinking much about the Castle. They strolled a little farther, and when they reached the wall he made a careful survey of the other side.

"What are you looking for?" Mrs. Austin inquired.

He laughed a little consciously. "Walls have ears, they say. It's true this might be deaf by now—it's old enough."

She raised her eyes to his face. "Does it matter whether it's deaf or not?"

"Well, yes; I think it does. There might be a country bumpkin asleep on the grass. We might wake him up."

"If I understand country bumpkins, we should be doing him a service."

Gilbert stood smiling and pulling his moustache, as if he were calling up a half-remembered scene. "Once I thought myself alone," he said, "utterly alone. That was in a ruin, too, a long while ago, and I—well, I recited some poetry. Suddenly I felt an impulse to look behind a pillar, and there was a brute, in a cheap travelling-suit, grinning from ear to ear. I had a great mind to kill him."

"You didn't, I hope?" said Mrs. Austin, sitting down on a broken bit of wall and putting up her parasol. "Not but what there are plenty of people in cheap travelling-suits."

"No, I took off my hat to him, and walked away. I didn't kill him, but I think I might as well; he couldn't have haunted me worse. However, it taught me caution."

"So it seems. And you are going to recite poetry now?"

"No; I don't think I am. At least—yes. I am going to talk about Cornwall."

"Is that poetry?"

"Isn't it?" said Gilbert, coming a step nearer. "Or, rather, wasn't it?"

"Perhaps in King Arthur's days."

Digitized by Google

"In no days of your own?—of our own?" he persisted, in a low voice. "If the old time at West Hill wasn't poetry, there has been none in my life. You said this morning you had not forgotten it."

"No," she answered, "I have not; but if that were poetry, it strikes me that the volume was closed and laid away, a long while ago."

"It is true," said South. "You needn't remind me that I was the first to close it. I'm not likely to forget that! But, for the sake of those old Cornish days, I want you to let me say a word of explanation."

Mrs. Austin shook her head with a smile that was half hopeless, half compassionate. "No, no; there is no need of explanation—do not let us have any. You make me repeat myself," she added, lightly. "I told Mr. Leicester this morning that I objected to explanations."

South arched his brows. "It seems to me that it was early for Mr. Leicester to be trying to explain himself!"

"Possibly. And for you it is—late." Her tone was very kind as she went on. "Do you not see that if I had misunderstood you all these years, you could hardly set me right now? But I don't think I did misunderstand you; and for proof of it we were to be friends; and we are friends, I hope."

"It was all my fault," said South; "and to think that I never saw you from the day we parted at West Hill till yesterday! Tell me what you thought of me after I went."

She met his glance, but evaded his question. "There was no fault in the matter. Don't you remember we were to be quite free? You had a right to change your mind, and so had I."

"I was a fool! I was a raw boy—I was flattered; and she never meant anything!"

Mrs. Austin made a quick sign with her hand. "Oh, let it all rest!" she said. "You wrote afterwards; you did explain all that there was to explain. It was then that we agreed to be friends. Let us keep to that. As you say, it was only a boy and girl affair." She rose as she spoke, but Gilbert followed her.

"It is hard," he said. "My best wouldn't have been good enough; and it is you, of all people in the world, who know the worst of me."

She stopped, looked him in the face, and smiled. "It isn't very bad," she said, in her gentle voice; and South felt himself a feather weight in the scale, whether for good or evil.

He was silent, but with so unsatisfied an expression that it was evident he only lacked words for the moment, and would seek to speak again later. Mrs. Austin anticipated him.

"Were you out of your teens when we said 'Good-by?' Well, not much more, at any rate. Our real lives have been since then. I think people ought to keep their consciences in two or three compartments, and shut the lid down on all such bygone shortcomings. I am glad we have met again, if only to shake hands and say simply that we have outgrown old follies."

Digitized by Google

Gilbert looked down. "I was to have been a hero," he said, bitterly. "Do you remember?"

"Oh, I lived in King Arthur's Cornwall in those days—in Camelot and Tintagel," she replied. "No doubt you were to have been Galahad, or Percival at the very least. I expected the most wonderful things of all my friends."

"I think you did." He hesitated for a moment. "Are you more merciful now?" he asked, in a tone which was between jest and earnest.

"Oh, yes," was the ready answer; "I'm greatly changed. I can assure you that now I expect very little."

They were walking slowly at a little distance from the tower, and as the last words were spoken they caught sight of Tiny Vivian. She appeared to be intently studying the old stones. The dreary little nook in which she stood, pulling an ivy spray from the crumbling masonry, framed a picture of youth, full of delicate grace and hope. South gazed for a moment, and then turned to Mrs. Austin with a faint laugh. "She is in her teens still," he said.

When Frank came back from Bridge End that evening he found a bunch of ivy-leaves on his dressing-table. They had evidently been carefully chosen for variety of shape and colour, and were very daintily arranged. He uttered an impatient exclamation when he caught sight of the significant little bouquet, and stood looking at it with a frown. He knew that his cousin had stolen in during his absence, and left it as a token that Gilbert South had had his turn that afternoon.

Digitized by Google

Illusions of Memory.

The mystery of memory lies in the apparent immediateness of the mind's contact with the vanished past. In "looking back" on our life, we seem to ourselves for the moment to rise above the limitations of time, to undo its work of extinction, seizing again the realities which its onrushing stream had borne far from us. Memory is a kind of resurrection of the buried past: as we fix our retrospective glance on it, it appears to start anew into life: forms arise within our minds which, we feel, faithfully represent the things that were. We do not ask for any proof of the fidelity of this dramatic representation of our past history by memory. It is seen to be a faithful imitation, just because it is felt to be a revival of the past. To seek to make the immediate testimony of memory more sure seems absurd, since all our ways of describing and illustrating this mental operation assume that in the very act of performing it we do recover a part of our seemingly "dead selves."

To challenge the veracity of a person's memory is one of the boldest things one can do in the way of attacking deep-seated conviction. Memory is the peculiar domain of the individual. In going back in recollection to the scenes of other years he is drawing on the secret storehouse of his own consciousness, with which a stranger must not intermeddle. Philosophers commonly distinguish memory as mediate knowledge of something absent, from perception as immediate knowledge of something present. Yet people are wont to feel just as certain of the one as of the other. Indeed, it may almost be said that a man more easily brooks a critical investigation of an act of perception than of an act of recollection. Perception has to do with our common objective world, and we allow others to have their say about the impressions it produces. Most people are willing, to some extent, to regulate and correct their individual perceptions of external objects by others' perceptions. And hardly anybody is so obstinate as to refuse to reinspect an object in deference to an assurance by others that what he thinks he has seen differs from the reality. But with respect to matters of recollection people are apt to be much more dogmatic. To cast doubt on a man's memory is commonly resented as a rude impertinence. It looks like an attempt of another to walk into the strictly private apartment of his own mind. Even if the challenger professedly bases his challenge on the testimony of his own memory, the challenged party is hardly likely to allow the right of comparing testimonies. He can in most cases boldly assert that those who differ from him are lacking in his power of recollection. The past, in becoming the past, has, for most

Digitized by Google

people, ceased to be a common object of reference; it has become a part of the individual's own inner self, and cannot be easily dislodged or shaken.

Let not the gentle reader imagine, then, from the title of this paper, that we are about to commit the sacrilege of questioning the veracity of memory in general. We are not bent on the suicidal Samsonian project of trying to shake the foundations of belief to the bottom, and to reduce the minds of our readers as well as our own from a state of comfortable security respecting the world to one of utter scepticism and confusion. Our more modest and, we would hope, perfectly legitimate aim is to point out that memory, like our other faculties, may blunder now and then. We would crave our readers' patience as we seek to prove that memory, notwithstanding the look of perfect sincerity it wears, is capable of deceiving us; that when in the act of recollection we seem to be reaching and touching the past, we may be merely grasping a shadow.

Those of our readers who are familiar with the phenomena of sense-illusion will feel but little hesitation in following us in this voyage of discovery into the comparatively unknown territory of memory-illusion. The fact that the stereoscope deceives us every time we look into it, by forcing us to see a solid object when we know there are only two flat photographs, does not lessen our belief in the general certainty of visual perception. Even the great savant Helmholtz, who probably knows more about optical illusion than any other living man, feels quite as confident of the reality of ordinary visible objects as the least scientific of men. Similarly, it is possible to find out that memory is a very blundering witness in many cases, and yet to feel sure that she can be perfectly well depended on to speak the truth about things with which she may be assumed to be thoroughly familiar.

Although people in general are, as observed, instinctively disposed to be very confident about matters of recollection, reflective persons are pretty sure to find out, sooner or later, that they occasionally fall into errors of memory. It is not the philosopher who first hints at the mendacity of memory, but the "plain man" who takes careful note of what really happens in the world of his personal experience. Thus we hear persons, quite innocent of speculative doubt, qualifying an assertion made on personal recollection by the proviso, "unless my memory has played me false." And even less reflective persons, including many who pride themselves on their excellent memory, will when sorely pressed make a grudging admission that they may after all be in error. Perhaps the weakest degree of such an admission, and one which allows to the conceding party a semblance of victory, is illustrated in the "last word" of one who has boldly maintained a proposition on the strength of individual recollection, but begins to recognise the instability of his position: "I either witnessed the occurrence or dreamt it." This is sufficient to prove that, with all people's boasting about the infallibility of memory,

Digitized by Google

there are many who have a shrewd suspicion that some of its asseverations will not bear a very close scrutiny. We may, therefore, in our present inquiry, presume on some amount of general acquaintance with the fact of illusory recollection.

In this study of the fallacies of memory we shall confine ourselves to illusions strictly so called, that is to say, to instances of error in which the mind has all the immediate assurance of distinctly recalling some past occurrence. Thus an illusion of memory exactly corresponds to an illusion of perception, when we seem to ourselves distinctly to see something, and yet afterwards find that we do not see it. Hence our line of inquiry will not embrace the large subject of misty recollection, and of forgetfulness, which last some people think to be a more wonderful thing than memory itself. Hazy recollection is not illusive recollection, any more than hazy vision is illusive vision, though mistiness in each instance easily becomes the starting-point of illusion. Just as objects seen in a fog easily take a false appearance to the imagination, so events seen through the haze of years easily get transformed into something very different from the reality. It may be added that we shall throughout seek to illustrate mnemonic illusion by visual illusion. It will be found, we believe, that there is a close analogy between the forms of illusion in vision and recollection, as well as between the modes of their production, though, as far as we are aware, this parallelism has never been traced out.

Since an illusion of memory is a sort of counterfeit recollection, we shall best understand the spurious imitation by understanding the genuine thing. Every complete act of memory appears to involve three things, and only three: the assurance (1) that something did really happen to me; (2) that it happened in the way I now think; and (3) that it happened when it appears to have happened. I cannot be said to recall a past event unless I feel sure on each of these points. Thus, to be able to say that an event happened at a particular date, and yet unable to describe how it happened, means that I have a very incomplete recollection. The same is true when I can recall an event pretty distinctly, but fail to assign it its proper date. This being so, it follows that there are three possible openings, and only three, by which errors of memory may creep in. And as a matter of fact each of these openings does let in one class of mnemonic illusion. Thus we have (1) false recollections, to which there correspond no real events of personal history; (2) others which misrepresent the manner of happening of the events; and (3) others which falsify the date of the event remembered.

We said there was a close correspondence between illusions of perception and of recollection. The force of this remark may be seen in the fact that each of these classes of illusion answers to a variety of visual error. Class (1) may be likened to the optical illusions known as phosphenes, or apparent circles of light, which arise when the eyeball is pressed by the finger. Here we can prove that there is nothing actually seen in the field of vision, and that the semblance of a visible object

Digitized by Google

arises from quite another source than that of ordinary light-stimulation, and by what may be called an accident. Similarly, in the case of the first class of mnemonic illusions, we shall find that there is nothing actually recollected, but that the mnemonic phosphene or phantom of recollected object can be accounted for in quite another way.

Again, class (2) has its visual analogue in those optical illusions which depend on the effects of haziness already alluded to, of atmospheric action, and of any reflecting and refracting media interposed between the eye and the object. Examples of atmospheric effect are the apparent changes of colour which objects undergo when seen at a distance. The effects of refraction and of reflection are illustrated by the broken appearance of a stick half immersed in water, and by the curious phenomena of mirage. In all these cases, though there is some real thing corresponding to the perception, this is seen in a highly defective, distorted, and misleading form. In like manner we can say that the images of memory often get obscured, distorted, and otherwise altered when they have receded into the dim distance, and are looked back upon through a long space of intervening mental experience.

Finally, class (3) has its visual counterpart in erroneous perceptions of distance, as when, for example, owing to the clearness of the mountain atmosphere and the absence of intervening objects, the side of the Jungfrau looks to the inexperienced tourist at Wengernalp hardly farther than a stone's throw. It will be found that when our memory falsifies the date of an event, the error arises much in the same way as a visual miscalculation of distance.

We will now try to illustrate these varieties of mnemonic illusion more fully, beginning with those which, by help of our analogy with optical illusions, may be called the phosphenes or spectra of memory.

All recollection takes place by means of a present mental image which returns with a certain degree of vividness, and is instantaneously identified with some past event. In many cases this instinctive process of identification proves to be legitimate, for, as a matter of fact, real impressions are the first and the commonest source of such lively mnemonic images. But it is not always so. There are other sources of our mental imagery which compete, so to speak, with the region of real personal experience. And sometimes these leave a vivid image, having all the appearance of a genuine recollection. When this is so it is impossible by a mere introspective glance to detect the falsity of the message from the past. We are in the same position as the purchaser in a jet market, where a spurious commodity has got inextricably mixed up with the genuine, and there is no ready criterion by which he may distinguish the true from the false. Such a person, if he purchases freely, is pretty sure to make a number of mistakes. Similarly, all of us are liable to take counterfeit mnemonic images for genuine ones; that is to say, to fall into an illusion of "recollecting" what never really took place.

But what, it may be asked, are these false and illegitimate sources of

Digitized by Google

mnemonic images, these unauthorised mints which issue a spurious mental coinage, and so confuse the genuine currency? They consist of two regions of our internal mental life which most closely resemble the actual perception of real things in vividness and force, namely, dream-consciousness and waking imagination. Each of these may introduce into the mind vivid images which tend, under certain circumstances, to assume the guise of recollections of actual events.

That our dream-experience may now and again lead us to fall into illusory recollection has already been hinted. And it is easy to see why this is so. When dreaming we have a mental experience which closely approximates in intensity and reality to that of waking perception. To the savage, dreams are as real as waking perceptions, and it is probable that young children take their dream-world for a real and substantial structure. Consequently, dreams may leave behind them, for a time, vivid images which simulate the appearance of real images of memory. Most of us, perhaps, have felt this after-effect of dreaming on our waking thoughts. How hard it is sometimes to shake off the impression left by a vivid dream that a dead friend has returned to life! During the day that follows the dream, we have at intermittent moments something like an assurance that we have seen the departed one; and though we immediately correct the impression by reflecting that we are recalling but a dream, it tends to revive within us with a strange pertinacity.

In addition to this proximate effect of a dream in disturbing the normal process of recollection, there is reason to suppose that dreams may exert a more remote effect on our memories. So widely different in its form is our dreaming from our waking experience that our dreams are rarely recalled as wholes with perfect distinctness. They revive in us only as disjointed fragments, and for brief moments when some accidental resemblance in the present happens to stir the latent trace they have left on our minds. We get sudden flashes out of our dream-world, and the process is too rapid, too incomplete for us to identify the region whence the flashes come. It is highly probable that our dreams are, to a large extent, answerable for the sense of familiarity that we sometimes experience in visiting a new locality, or in seeing a new face. If, as some of the best authorities say, we are, when asleep, always dreaming more or less distinctly, and if, as we know, dreaming is a continual process of transformation of our waking impressions in new combinations, it is not surprising that our dreams should sometimes take the form of forecasts of our waking life, and that objects and scenes of this life never before seen should now and again wear a familiar look. That some instances of this puzzling sense of familiarity can be explained in this way is proved. In a very interesting work on dreams, *Schlaf und Traum*, recently published by Paul Radestock, the writer says: "When I have been taking a walk, with my thoughts quite unfettered, the idea has often occurred to me that I had seen, heard, or thought of this or that thing once before, without being able to recall when, where, and in

Digitized by Google

what circumstances. This happened at the time when, with a view to the publication of the present work, I was in the habit of keeping an exact record of my dreams. Consequently I was able to turn to this after these impressions, and on doing so I generally found the conjecture confirmed that I had previously dreamt something like it." Scientific inquiry is often said to destroy all beautiful thoughts about nature and life; but while it destroys it creates. Is it not almost a romantic idea that just as our waking life images itself in our dreams, so our dream-life may send back some of its shadowy phantoms into our prosaic every-day world, touching this with something of its own weird beauty?

Not only may dreams beget these momentary illusions of memory, they may give rise to something like permanent illusions. If a dream serves to connect a certain idea with a place or person, and subsequent experience does not tend to correct this, we may keep the belief that we have actually witnessed the event. And we may naturally expect that this result will occur most frequently in the case of those who habitually dream vividly, as young children. It seems to us that many of the quaint fancies which children get into their heads about things they hear of arise in this way. The present writer, when a child, got the notion that when his baby-brother was weaned, he was taken up on a grassy hill and tossed about. He had a vivid idea of having seen this curious ceremony. He has in vain tried to get an explanation of this picturesque rendering of an incident of babyhood from his friends, and has come to the conclusion that it was the result of a dream. If, as seems probable, children's dreams thus give rise to subsequent illusions of memory, the fact would throw a curious light on some of the startling quasi-records of childish experience to be met with in autobiographical literature. Oddly enough, too, old age seems to resemble youth in this confusion of dream-recollection with waking memory. Dr. Carpenter* tells us of "a lady of advanced age who . . . continually dreams about passing events, and seems entirely unable to distinguish between her dreaming and her waking experiences, narrating the former with implicit belief in them, and giving directions based on them." This confusion in the case of the old probably arises not from an increase in the intensity of the dreams, but from a decrease in the intensity of the waking impressions. As Sir Henry Holland remarks,† in old age life approaches to the state of a dream.

The other source of what we have called the phosphenes or spectra of memory is waking imagination. In certain morbid conditions of mind, and in the case of the few healthy minds endowed with special imaginative force, the products of this mental activity closely resemble dreams in their vividness and apparent actuality. When this is the case, illusions of memory may arise at once just as in the case of dreams.‡

* *Mental Physiology*, p. 456. † *Mental Physiology*, 2nd ed. p. 172.

‡ The close connection and continuity between normal and abnormal states of mind is illustrated in the fact that in insanity this illusion of taking past imaginations

Digitized by Google

This will happen more easily when the imagination has been for some time occupied with the same group of ideal scenes, persons, or events. To Dickens, as is well known, his fictitious characters were for the time realities, and after he had finished his story their forms and their doings lingered with him, assuming the aspect of personal recollections. So, too, the energetic activity of imagination which accompanies a deep and absorbing sympathy with another's painful experiences, may easily result in so vivid a realisation of all their details as to leave an after-sense of *personal* suffering. All highly sympathetic persons who have closely accompanied beloved friends through a great sorrow have known something of this subsequent feeling.

In the case of most people, however, waking imagination seldom, if ever, rises to this pitch of reality. Hence the illusions of memory which arise from this source commonly appear only after the lapse of some time, when in the natural course of things the mental images derived from actual experience would sink to a certain degree of faintness. Habitual novel-readers often catch themselves mistaking the echo of some passage in a good story for the trace left by an actual event. Persons' names, striking sayings, and events themselves, when first heard or witnessed, may seem familiar to us, and to recall some past like impression when they happen to resemble the creations of some favourite novelist. And so, too, any recital of another's experience, whether oral or literary, if it deeply interests us and awakens a specially vivid imagination of the events described, may easily become the starting-point of an illusory recollection. Children are in the habit of "drinking in" with their vigorous imaginations what is told them and read to them, and hence they are specially likely to fall into this kind of error. Not only so: when they grow up and their early recollections lose their definiteness, becoming a few fragments saved from a lost past, it must pretty certainly happen that if any ideas derived from these recitals are preserved, they will simulate the form of memories. The present writer often catches himself falling for a moment into the illusion of believing that he actually visited the Exhibition of 1851, the reason being that he recalls the descriptions given to him of it by his friends, and the excitement attending their journey to London on the occasion.

Here, then, we have another source of error that we must take into account in judging of the authenticity of an autobiographical narration of the events of childhood. The more imaginative the writer the greater the risk of illusion from this source as well as from that of dream-fancies. It is highly probable that in such full and explicit records as those given

---

for past realities becomes far more persistent. Abercrombie (*Intellectual Powers*, Part III. sect. iv. § 2, "Insanity") speaks of "visions of the imagination which have formerly been indulged in of that kind which we call waking dreams or castle-building recurring to the mind in this condition, and now believed to have a real existence." Thus one patient believed in the reality of the good luck previously predicted by a fortune-teller.

Digitized by Google

by Rousseau, by Goethe, or by De Quincey, some part of the narrative is based on mental images which come floating down the stream of time, not from any actual occurrence of the writer's personal experience, but from the airy region of dreamland or of waking fancy.

Even when the quasi-recollection does answer to a real event of childish history, it may still be an illusion. The fact that others, in narrating events to us, are able to awaken imaginations that afterwards appear as past realities, suggests that much of our supposed early recollection owes its existence to what our parents and friends have from time to time told us respecting the first stages of our history. We see, then, how much uncertainty attaches to all autobiographical description of very early life.

Modern science suggests another possible source of these phosphenes of memory. May it not happen that by the law of hereditary transmission, which is now being applied to mental as well as bodily phenomena, ancestral experiences will now and then reflect themselves in our mental life, and so give rise to apparent personal recollections? No one can say that this is not so. When the infant first steadies his eyes on the objects of its environment, it may, for aught we know, experience a feeling akin to that described above, when through a survival of dream-fancy we take some new scene to be already familiar. At the age when new emotions rapidly develop themselves, when our hearts are full of wild romantic aspirations, do there not seem to blend with the eager passion of the time deep resonances of a vast and mysterious past, and may not this feeling be a sort of reminiscence of prenatal, that is, ancestral experience? The idea is a fascinating one, worthy to be a new scientific support for Plato's and Wordsworth's beautiful thought. But in our present stage of knowledge, any reasoning on this supposition would probably appear too fanciful. Some day we may find out how much ancestral experience is capable of bequeathing in this way, whether simply shadowy, undefinable mental tendencies, or something like definite concrete ideas. If, for example, it were found that a child descended from a line of seafaring ancestors, which had never seen or heard of the "dark-gleaming sea," manifested a feeling of recognition when first taken to behold it, we might be pretty sure that such a thing as prenatal recollection does take place. But till we have such facts, it seems better to refer the "shadowy recollections" to sources which fall within the individual's own experience.

It is commonly said by philosophers that our sense of personal identity rests on memory. But if the latter is as erring as we have seen, the former can hardly be as absolutely certain and incorruptible as some thinkers would make out. In point of fact, this sense of identity is liable to take strange forms, and to play us odd pranks. In dreams we often distinctly lose all hold on ourselves, and take up the curious position of spectators at a transformation scene, in which our own respectable Ego is playing a sort of game of "bo-peep" with us. And

Digitized by Google

what happens in dreams may happen in waking life. Every act of intense sympathy is for the time a confusion of our sense of identity. Waking imagination, too, leads to a fictitious expansion of ourselves. Thus the novelist tells us that while he is writing his stories he is wont for the nonce to project himself into the figures, identifying himself with them. And our study of the phosphenes of memory has told us that all of us are liable to extend this idea of self beyond the limits of our actual personal experience. To mistake dream fancy for waking fact is not perhaps to lose the sense of identity, since our dreams are, after all, a part of our personal experience; but to imagine that we have actually seen what we have simply heard from another's lips, is clearly to confuse the boundaries of our identity. Thus, through the corruption of our memories, a sort of sham self gets mixed up with our real self, so that we cannot, strictly speaking, be sure that when we project ourselves into a remote past we are not really running away from our true personality.

It is now time to pass to the second group of illusions of memory, which, according to the analogy of visual illusions, may be called atmospheric illusions. Here the degree of error is less than that in the case of phosphene illusions. There is something real, answering to the apparent recollection, and this reality falls within the individual's waking experience. But the reality is not truthfully represented by the present mnemonic image or group of images. We do not recall the event as it happened, but see it in part only, and obscured, or bent and distorted as by a process of refraction. Indeed this transformation of the past does closely correspond with the transformation of a visible object effected by intervening media. Our minds are such refracting media, and the past reappears to us not as it actually was when it was close to us, but in numerous ways, altered and disguised by the intervening spaces of our mental life.

For one thing our memories restore us only fragments of our past life. Just as objects seen imperfectly at a great distance may assume a shape quite unlike their real one, so an inadequate representation of a past event by memory often amounts to misrepresentation. When revisiting a place that we have not seen for many years, we are apt to find that our recollection of it consisted only of some insignificant details, which arranged themselves in our minds into something oddly unlike the actual scene. So, too, some accidental accompaniment of an incident in early life is preserved, as though it were the main feature, serving to give quite an untrue colouring to the whole occurrence. It seems quite impossible to account for these particular survivals, they appear to be so capricious. When a little time has elapsed after an event, and the attendant circumstances fade away from memory, it is often difficult to say why we were impressed with it as we afterwards prove to have been. It is no doubt possible to see that many of the recollections of our childhood owe their vividness to the fact of the exceptional character of the event; but this cannot always be recognised. Some of them seem to our

Digitized by Google

mature minds very oddly selected, although no doubt there are in every case good reasons, if we could only discover them, why those particular incidents rather than any others should have been retained.

The liability to error resulting from mere obliviscence and the arbitrary selection of mental images is seen most plainly perhaps in our subsequent representation and estimate of whole periods of early life. Our idea of any stage of our past history, as early childhood, or schooldays, is built up out of a few fragmentary relic-images, which cannot be certainly known to answer to the most important and essential experiences of the times. When, for example, we try to decide whether our schooldays were our happiest days, as is so often alleged, it is obvious that we are liable to fall into illusion through the inadequacy of memory to preserve characteristic or typical features and none but these. We cannot easily recall the ordinary every-day level of feeling of a distant period of life, but rather think of exceptional moments of rejoicing or depression. The present writer's idea of the emotional experience of his schooldays is built up out of a few scrap recollections of extraordinary and exciting events, such as unexpected holidays, success in the winning of prizes, famous "rows" with the masters, and so on. Besides the impossibility of getting at the average and prevailing mental tone of a distant section of life, there is a special difficulty in determining the degree of happiness of the past, arising from the fact that our memory for pleasures and for pains may not be equally good. Most people, perhaps, can recall the enjoyments of the past much more vividly than the sufferings. On the other hand, there seem to be a few who find the retention of the latter the easier of the two. This fact should not be forgotten in reading the narrative of early hardships which some recent autobiographies have given us.

Not only does our idea of the past become inexact by the mere decay and disappearance of essential features, it becomes positively incorrect through the gradual incorporation of elements that do not properly belong to it. Sometimes it is easy to see how these extraneous ideas get imported into our conception of a past event. Suppose that a man has lost a valuable scarf-pin. His wife suggests that a particular servant, whose reputation does not stand too high, has stolen it. When he afterwards recalls the loss, the chances are that he will confuse the fact with the conjecture attached to it, and say he remembers that this particular servant did steal the pin. Thus the products of past imagination not only give rise, as we have seen, to baseless illusions of memory, but serve to corrupt and partially falsify recollections that have a genuine basis of fact. This class of mnemonic illusions approaches illusions of perception. When the imagination supplies the interpretation at the very time and the mind reads this into the perceived object, the error is one of perception. When the addition is made afterwards, on reflecting upon the perception, the error is one of memory. The fallacies of testimony which depend on an adulteration of pure observation with

Digitized by Google

inference and conjecture, as, for example, the inaccurate and wild statements of people respecting their experiences of mesmerism and spiritualism, are probably much oftener illusions of memory than of perception.*

In many cases, however, it is difficult to see any close relation between the fact remembered and the foreign element imported into it. An idea of memory seems sometimes to lose its proper moorings, so to speak; to drift about helplessly among other ideas, and finally, by some chance, to hook itself on to one of these, as though it naturally belonged to it. Anybody who has had an opportunity of carefully testing the truthfulness of his recollection of some remote event in early life will have found how oddly extraneous elements get imported into the memorial picture. Incidents get put into wrong places, the wrong persons are introduced into a scene, and so on. Here again we may illustrate the mnemonic illusion by a visual one. When a tree standing between the spectator and a house is not sharply distinguished from the latter it may serve to give it a very odd appearance.

These confusions of the mental image may even arise after a short interval has elapsed. In the case of many of the fleeting impressions that only get half recollected, this kind of error is very easy. Thus, for example, I lent a book to a friend last week. I really remember the act of lending it, but have forgotten the person. But I am not aware of this. The picture of memory has unknowingly to myself been filled up by this unconscious process of shifting and re-arrangement, and the idea of another person has by some odd accident got substituted for that of the real borrower. If we could go deeply enough into the matter, we should of course be able to explain why this particular confusion arose. We might find, for example, that the two persons were associated in our minds by a link of resemblance, or that we had dealings with the other person about the same time. Similarly, when an event gets put into a wrong locality, we may find that it is because we heard of the occurrence when staying at the particular place, or in some other way had the image of the place closely associated in our minds with the event. But often we are wholly unable to explain the displacement.

So far we have been speaking of the passive processes by which the past comes to wear a new face to our imaginations. In these our present habits of feeling and thinking take no part; all is the work of the past, of the decay of memory, and the gradual confusion of images. This process of disorganisation may be likened to the action of air and damp on some old manuscript. Beside this passive process of transformation, there is a more active one in which our present minds co-operate. This may be illustrated by the operation of trying to "interpret" an old manuscript which has got partially obliterated, or of "restoring" a faded picture; in each of which operations error will be pretty sure to creep in through an importation of the restorer's own ideas into the relic of the past.

* See Dr. Carpenter's *Mental Physiology*, fourth edition, p. 456.

Digitized by Google

Just as when distant objects are seen mistily our imaginations come into play, leading us to fancy that we see something completely and distinctly, so when the images of memory become dim, our present imagination helps to restore them, putting a new patch into the old garment. If only there is some relic of the past preserved, a bare suggestion of the way in which it may have happened will often suffice to produce the conviction that it actually did happen in this way. Now the suggestion that naturally arises in our minds will bear the stamp of our present modes of experience and habits of thought. Hence, in trying to reconstruct the remote past, we are constantly in danger of importing our present selves into our past selves.

This kind of illusion of memory depending on present imagination is strikingly illustrated by the curious cases of mistaken identity which the proceedings of our law-courts supply us from time to time. When a witness in good faith, but erroneously, affirms that a man is the same as an old acquaintance of his, we may feel sure that there is some striking point or points of similarity between the two persons. But this of itself would only partly account for the illusion, since we often see new faces that, by a number of curious points of affinity, call up in a tantalising way old and familiar countenances. What helps in this case to produce the illusion is the preconception that the present man *is* the witness's old friend. That is to say, his recollection is partly true, though largely false. He does really recall the similar feature, movement, or tone of voice; he only seems to himself to recall the rest of his friend's appearance; for, to speak correctly, he projects the present impression into the past, and constructs his old friend's face out of elements supplied by the new face.

We said just now that we tend to project our present modes of experience into the past. We paint our past in the hues of the present. Thus we imagine that things which impressed us in some remote period of life must answer to what is impressive in our present stage of mental development. For example, a person recalls a hill near the home of his childhood, and has the conviction that it was of great height. On revisiting the place he finds that the eminence is quite insignificant. How can we account for this? For one thing, it is to be observed that to his undeveloped childish muscles the climbing to the top meant a considerable expenditure of energy, to be followed by a sense of fatigue. The man remembers these feelings, and unconsciously reasoning by present experience, that is to say, by the amount of walking which would now produce this sense of fatigue, imagines that the height was vastly greater than it really was.

From this cause arises the tendency generally to exaggerate the impressions of early life. Youth is the period of novel effects, when all the world is fresh, and new and striking impressions crowd in thickly on the mind. Consequently it takes much less to produce a given amount of mental excitation in childhood than in after life. In looking

Digitized by Google

back on this part of our history, we recall for the most part just those events and scenes which mostly stirred our minds by their strangeness, novelty, &c., and so impressed themselves on the tablet of our memory; and it is this sense of something out of the ordinary beat that gives the characteristic colour to our recollection. This being so, we unconsciously transform the past occurrence by reasoning from our present standard of what is impressive. Who has not felt an unpleasant disenchantment in revisiting some garden or park that seemed a wondrous paradise to his young eyes? All our feelings are capable of leading us into this kind of illusion. What seemed beautiful or awful to us as children is now pictured in imagination as corresponding to what moves our mature minds to delight or awe. People who a little outshone our own circle of friends, perhaps, in style of dress and living, seemed to us as children little short of princes and princesses. Could we actually see them with our present eyes, we should, alas, no longer find the glory in which our young fancies had encircled their heads.

While the past may thus take an illusory hue from the very changes which our emotional life undergoes, it becomes still further transformed by the idealising touch of a present feeling. This is so familiar a fact as hardly to need illustration. Our emotions of love, of reverence, of æsthetic admiration are artists that employ the past as a kind of canvas for the exercise of their imaginative skill. We instinctively tend to idealise the objects of a past love. The old rule *de mortuis nihil nisi bonum* has its foundations deep laid in our emotional nature. It is much the same with the emotions of beauty and sublimity that attach to objects of inanimate nature as well as to human beings. Even a painful emotion, as resentment and hatred, may to some extent effect this result of transformation. By dwelling habitually on the wrongs done us by an old friend, and forgetting all the good things we know of him, we may come to transform this person into a monster very unlike the reality.

Enough has now been said, perhaps, to show in how many ways our retrospective imagination transforms the actual events of our past life. So thoroughly indeed do the relics of this past get shaken together in new kaleidoscopic combinations, so much of the result of later experiences gets imported into our early years, that it may well be asked whether if the records of our actual life were ever read out to us we should be able to recognise it. It looks as though we could be only sure of recalling recent events with any degree of accuracy and completeness. As soon as they recede at any considerable distance from us, they are subject to a sort of atmospheric effect. Much grows indistinct and drops altogether out of sight, and what is still seen often takes new and grotesquely unlike shapes. More than this, the play of fancy, like the action of some refracting medium, bends and distorts the outlines of memory's objects, making them wholly unlike the originals.

And now we may pass to the third class of illusions of memory, those which may be called errors of perspective. This is the least degree

Digitized by Google

of mnemonic illusion. The recollection may reproduce a real occurrence, and reproduce it in its essential features, but may assign it a wrong place in the sequent order of the past, just as the eye may see an object as it is, but err as to its distance.

In order to understand these errors of mnemonic perspective, we must see what customarily determines our judgment of the remoteness of past events. A certain analogy will be found to hold here between the mnemonic and the visual judgment of distance. Among the many circumstances that help the eye to measure the distance of an object must be reckoned the degree of clearness or faintness of the impression made by the object. Other things being the same, the clearer the impression, the nearer seems the object. Again, our visual estimate of the distance of an object is influenced by the presence or absence of other objects before and behind it with whose distance it may be compared. Thus a ship at sea looks too near, because there are no intervening objects to "throw it back," while the moon when near the horizon looks further away (and consequently larger) than when over our heads, because of the numerous objects coming between the spectator and that luminary in the former case. Conversely, an object appears to be nearer the spectator when seen to be in front of another object than when there is no more remote object behind it. To each of these circumstances affecting the visual judgment of distance there corresponds an influence in the estimation of the remoteness of events. That is to say, our estimate of distance in past time is governed by two chief considerations, the vividness or faintness of the reviving image, and the recognised relation of the particular event to other events in front of and behind it. And this being so, we are liable to illusions of memory either when the degree of vividness deviates from the customary or normal degree for that particular distance, or when the mnemonic object wants its proper relations of before and after to other events. Our illusions of perspective commonly arise from a combination of both of these influences. Still they can, to some extent, be treated apart. Let us then first look at the influence of the circumstance of unusual vividness or faintness of the memorial image.

Speaking roughly and generally, we may say that the vividness of an image of memory decreases in proportion to the distance of the event. But this is not an infallible criterion of distance. The very fact that different people so often dispute about the dates and the relative order of past events experienced in common, shows pretty plainly that images of the same age tend to arise in the mind with very unequal degrees of vividness. Sometimes images of very remote incidents may start up in our minds with a singular degree of brightness and force. And when this is the case there is a disposition to think of them as near. If the relations of the event to other events preceding and succeeding it are not remembered, this momentary illusion will persist. We have all heard persons exclaim—"It seems only yesterday," under the sense of nearness which accompanies a recollection of a remote event when vividly excited.

Digitized by Google

In passing from place to place, in talking with others, and in reading, we are liable to the sudden return by hidden paths of association of incidents that had long seemed forgotten, and when they thus start up fresh and sound, away from their proper surroundings, they invariably induce a feeling of their propinquity. No one can say why these particular images, long buried in oblivion, should thus resuscitate in possession of so much vitality. There seems indeed to be almost as much of the arbitrary and capricious in the selection by memory of its vivid images as in the selection of its images as a whole; and, this being so, it is plain that we are greatly exposed to the risk of illusion from this source.

It may be added that this appearance of nearness is greatly intensified by a conscious concentration of mind on the remote past. When, for example, old friends come together and talk over the days of yore, there is a gradual reinstatement of the lost experience. Incident after incident returns, adding something to the whole picture till it acquires a degree of completeness, coherence, and vividness that render it hardly distinguishable from a very recent experience. The process is like looking at a distant object through a field-glass. Mistiness disappears, fresh details come into view, till we seem to ourselves to be almost within reach of the object.

There is an opposite effect in the case of recent occurrences that, for some reason or another, have left but a faint impression on the memory; though this fact is not, perhaps, so familiar as the other. I met a friend, we will suppose, a few days since at my club, and we exchanged a few words. My mind was somewhat preoccupied at the time, and the occurrence did not stamp itself on my recollection. To-day I meet him again, and he reminds me of a promise I made him at the time. His reminder suffices to restore a dim image of the incident, but the fact of its dimness leads to the illusion that it really happened much longer ago, and it is only on my friend's strong assurances, and on reflecting from other data that it must have occurred the day he mentions, that I am able to dismiss the illusion.

As we have hinted, in ordinary circumstances the tendency to illusion arising from too great or too little vividness in the memorial image is corrected by a recognition of the relation of the event to other events whose distance is supposed to be known. In point of fact, our conception of the past is made up of images of certain fixed prominent objects or landmarks, so to speak, in the memorial vista. And the full and distinct recollection of an event means the reference of it to some one of these leading surviving images, these marking posts which have not been wholly submerged by the waters of Lethe; the localisation of it in some one of the great divisions of the past; and the recognition of its relations of antecedence and sequence to other well-known events. This operation is greatly aided by a comparison of our experiences with those of others, and by the employment of a simple common scheme of time-divisions, as years,

Digitized by Google

seasons, months, &c. Indeed a past experience only takes up its right place, and appears at a correct distance from the present, when the mind, either alone, or still better in conjunction with other minds, has gone back on it again and again, noting its relations, and quietly putting it away, so to speak, into its proper niche in the ever-growing edifice of our fulfilled life.

This being so, what will happen when this process of localising impressions in the past has not taken place, and when ideas of events return without any discoverable relations to other events? Clearly there will be a certainty of error. Not only will any unusual degree of vividness now take effect in producing an illusion of nearness, but the very fact of the absence of proper points of measurement with which the remembered event might be seen to be connected, will beget an erroneous idea of its distance. This brings us to the second circumstance in the estimation of the degree of remoteness of past events.

The most striking examples of this illusory effect of detachment from fixed determining landmarks in the past are afforded by public events which lie outside the narrower circle of our personal life, and do not in the natural course of things become linked to any definitely localised points in the field of memory. These events are very stirring and engrossing for the time, but in many cases they pass out of the mind just as suddenly as they entered it. We have no occasion to revert to them, and if by chance we are afterwards reminded of them, they are pretty certain to look too near. One reason of this is that the fact of their having greatly interested us has served to render their images particularly vivid. Another reason is that they reappear to us out of their true place, not distinctly projected behind a long series of intervening occurrences, and not seen as simultaneous or closely connected in the order of succession with other events known to be at a particular distance. A curious instance of this illusory effect was supplied not long since by the case of the ex-detectives, the expiration of whose term of punishment (three years) served as an occasion for the newspapers to recall the event of their trial and conviction. The news that three years had elapsed since this well-remembered occurrence proved very startling to ourselves, and to a number of our friends, all of us agreeing that the event did not seem to be at more than a third of its real distance. The newspapers themselves commented on the apparent rapidity of the time, and this shows pretty plainly that there was some cause at work producing a common illusion.

It is to be added that even when past events are properly attached to those that precede and succeed them, fluctuations may arise in the estimation of their distance in consequence of variations in the character of the intervening spaces. In other words, our sense of distance in time is influenced by our sense of duration. According to Mr. G. J. Romanes, who has written a very interesting essay on our "Consciousness of Time" (*Mind*, July 1878), the sense of duration depends on two conditions. Time seems long, either when it is crowded with new and exciting

Digitized by Google

impressions, as on a summer tour, or when we are dwelling on the fact of its passing, and so are particularly conscious of it, as in waiting for a train. It seems short when it is comparatively empty of exciting experiences, provided that the mind does not dwell on its passage. Thus it appears comparatively short when we are busily employed about our ordinary avocations. Hence it happens that events just preceding a time of unusual excitement and novel experience look further off than events separated by the same interval of comparatively quiet impressions. Last Sunday's sermon seems much further away after a week in Switzerland than after a week of customary experience at home. Not only does an event appear to take up different distances because separated from the present by seemingly unequal intervals; the very fact that the one interval has been filled with exciting impressions, the other with comparatively quiet ones, serves to give the mental image of the event a different degree of vividness and distinctness in the two cases. Our mental development is not only a process of retention of the old, it is a process of displacement of the old by the new. The more interesting or the more exciting the new, the more rapidly does the old tend to disappear. Hence the apparent extrusion of a recollection by supervening experiences of unusual impressiveness. Even dream-consciousness seems capable of effecting this result, for the incidents of the preceding evening often appear to be dimmed and thrust further away after a night of exciting dreams. To young children events a year old look much further off than to adults, just because the interval, full of novel impressions from its young world, appears to swell out, and because the very impressiveness and fascination of these experiences tend to obscure the earlier ones and to banish them further from the present.

Enough has perhaps been said to show how much of uncertainty and of self-deception enters into the processes of memory. This much-esteemed faculty, valuable and indispensable though it certainly is, can lay no claim to that absolute infallibility which is sometimes said to belong to it. Our individual recollection left to itself is liable to a number of illusions even with regard to fairly recent events, and in the case of remote ones it may be said to err habitually and uniformly in a greater or less degree. To speak plainly, we can never be certain on the ground of our personal recollection alone that a distant event happened exactly in the way and at the time that we suppose. Nor does there seem to be any simple way by mere reflection on the contents of our memory of distinguishing what kinds of recollection are likely to be illusory.

How then, it may be asked, can we ever be certain that we are faithfully recalling the actual events of the past? Given a fairly good, that is, a cultivated memory, it may be said that in the case of very recent events we may feel pretty certain that, when the conditions of careful attention at the time were present, a distinct recollection is substantially correct. Also it is obvious that with respect to all repeated experiences our memories afford practically safe guides. When memory becomes the basis of general

Digitized by Google

knowledge, as of the truth that the pain of indigestion has followed a too copious indulgence in rich food, there is little room for an error of memory properly so called. On the other hand, when an event is not repeated in our experience, but forms a unique link in our personal history, the chances of error increase with the distance of the event, and here the best of us will do well to have resort to a process of verification and, if necessary, of correction. That is to say, we must look beyond our own internal mental states to some external facts. Thus the recollections of our early life may often be tested by letters written by ourselves or our friends at the time, by diaries, and so on. When there is no unerring objective record to be found, we may have recourse to the less satisfactory method of comparing our recollections with those of others. By so doing we may reach a rough average recollection which shall at least be free from any personal error. But even thus we cannot be sure of eliminating all error, since there may be a cause of illusion acting on all our minds alike, as, for example, the extraordinary nature of the occurrence, which would pretty certainly lead to a common exaggeration of its magnitude, &c., and since, moreover, this process of comparing recollections affords a fine opportunity for that reading back a present preconception into the past to which reference has already been made.

The result of our inquiry is less alarming than it looks at first sight. Knowledge is valuable for action, and error is chiefly hurtful in so far as it misdirects conduct. Now, in a general way, we do not need to act upon a recollection of remote single events; our conduct is sufficiently shaped by an accurate recollection of recent single events, together with those bundles of recollections of recurring events and sequences of events which constitute our knowledge of ourselves and our common knowledge of the world about us. Nature has done commendably well in endowing us with the means of cultivating our memories up to this point, and we ought not to blame her for not giving us powers which would only very rarely prove of any appreciable practical service to us.

J. S.

Digitized by Google

Molière's Acting Manager.

THE Théâtre-Français, like some translations of the age of our Second Charles, was the work of several hands. Of these the readiest and strongest was Molière, and of Molière the Français, though it might, and probably would, have existed without him, is, and will always remain, a kind of practical apotheosis. There was a moment, however, when the tradition established by the great comic poet, as an actor and the creator of a histrionic style, was in danger of extinction, and when it seemed as if his estate would crumble away and be scattered. Had matters been so ordered, the Français could never have been the historical and representative institution it is. That they were not so ordered is owing in great measure to the tact and energy of one of Molière's comrades, the player La Grange. He is regarded, and with good reason, as a founder of the House of Molière, and as one of those to whom the French stage is most beholden for its prosperity.

I.

Molière was but a stripling when he determined his vocation, and with it the prosperity of the French stage, by attaching himself to the Illustrious Theatre. It was in 1644, and the drama of France was in the prime and heyday of a lusty youth. Richelieu, dead two years before, had loved it well, and in his magnificent dictatorial way had fostered it. Its advance had been not less rapid than victorious. To the epoch's wits and poets the play was almost all literature. It was the readiest means of winning distinction, and even of making money. The air was full of it, and the rumour of its triumphs was everywhere. History counts the dramatists of the first part of the century by hundreds; and by this time most of these had said their say and passed into oblivion. Hardy, "eldest born of Chaos and old Night," the Saturn of the new order, as Corneille was its Jupiter, was but three years off his end, and must already have perpetrated the greater number of his seven hundred pieces. Du Ryer, always famous and always poor, was on the eve of his most notable work. Rotrou, a man with the makings of great things in him, had lived the larger part of his wild, adventurous, reckless artist-life, had produced much that was afterwards to be of use to his friend the author of *Amphytrion* and *Scapin*, and was soon to give his two best plays and die. The genius of Corneille was at its apogee. He had made *Le Cid*, and *Polyeucte*, and *Le Menteur;* he had laid therein the bases of a new art. Petty play-

Digitized by Google

wrights and poor pieces abounded. There were plenty of stages, too, and plenty of players. Louis XIII. had removed the ban from the actor's calling; it was a profession not unbecoming a gentleman, and lucrative in no mean degree. A dozen companies of strollers had possession of the provinces, and went their rounds there regularly. In Paris itself, the comedians of the Hôtel de Bourgogne had constituted themselves a private corporation, under royal patronage, and in receipt of a royal bounty; the Marais theatre, the birthplace of classic comedy and classic tragedy, had lost its Mondory, but was prosperous and honourable; and there were other stages yet. Things were ripening to a change, and ripening under the most generous influences. That best which was to be had everything in its favour. Never, it may be said, were masterpieces better prepared for than the *Misanthrope* and *Phèdre;* never had great artists a healthier environment, a stronger impulse from without, than Molière and Racine. The actual condition of the French stage and its literature attests the use they made of their advantages. The estate that they inherited was incomparably improved by them, and when they died they bequeathed it to a line of heirs who respected their authority, were inspirited by their example, and essayed to work up to the level of their achievement. Regnard succeeded Molière, Voltaire succeeded Racine; and we saw what they could do, and how they fulfilled their trust, in London here a few short months ago. Voltaire and Regnard had their successors, and through generation after generation the tradition they received has been handed down to the men of our own time. In France the theatre is a national institution. Augier and Hugo, Sardou and Labiche, are the heirs and representatives of Corneille and Molière, and the authors of a literature which, with all its faults and extravagances, is sincerely and earnestly wrought, and admirably dramatic as well, and therefore not unworthy of its origins and the great men who are more or less directly responsible for it.

In Spain and England, it is to be observed, the Drama had its age of gold about this time as it had in France. But in both these countries nothing came of its early opulence, and in neither has the stage fulfilled the splendid promise of its prime. The glories of the Spanish theatre were utterly transient. Calderon and Lope, Tirso and Rojas, Alarcon and Moreto, were all six contemporaries; they constitute in themselves the dramatic literature of Spain. Since their day the Spanish stage has not been illustrated by a single work of individual genius; either the inspiration of those who write for it has been imitated from one or other of these fathers of dramatic poetry, or it has been adapted from that of the French. Nothing more drearily factitious than the later volumes of the Spanish drama can well be imagined. It may be compared to an exhibition of wax-works, it is so palpably unreal, so absolutely imitative, so egregiously lifeless and conventional. And, it must be owned, we English are not much better off than the Spaniards. We have had our

Digitized by Google

Shakspeare, it is true, and we have had the bands of poets his contemporaries; we have had the writers of the Restoration, and of William's time and Anne's; we have had the Colmans, Cumberland, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Jerrold, and Knowles. On paper the statement of our dramatic wealth is exceedingly imposing. But the imposingness vanishes the moment it is put to a practical test. Our riches are but fairy money after all; they look well enough in the drawer, but we have only to offer them for current coin to see them turn into withered leaves. Shakspeare is, of course, a literature in himself; but he is hardly a stage-literature. Not long since, Mr. Matthew Arnold was moved to opine that the author of *Othello* was really not altogether so good a stage-poet as the author of the *Misanthrope;* and on this utterance of an eminent English critic a most eloquent commentary is furnished by the practice of eminent English managers. Only a few of Shakspeare's plays are public favourites, and not one of them is ever revived in its integrity. It is, I believe, an article of faith with the English-speaking world that Shakspeare's universality comprehended stage carpentry; but this appears to be a dogma that, as is often the case with dogmas, is respectable but in theory. The modern manager puts only as much of his Shakspeare on the stage as suits him. He arranges his poet as freely as he would a mere pantomime; he disguises him in appropriate broideries and armours, parcels him among set scenes copied from the best authorities, engages a popular actor for the chief part in him, and casts the rest of him how he can; and the results of his enterprise —which is partly archæological, partly pictorial, partly fashionable, and which is seldom or never poetical or dramatic—are only profitable now and then. Shakspeare's contemporaries, it need scarcely be noted, are in far poorer case than Shakspeare himself. Fletcher and Webster, Massinger and Jonson, Ford and Marlowe, are all great writers; but it is only to the student and the commentator that they are great playwrights. Their reputation is purely literary; their fashion is a forgotten one; and if they are played at all, it can only be on such terms and after such corrections as render them something other than themselves. It is the same with Congreve and Otway, with Vanbrugh and Centlivre and Hoadly; the same, in a greater or less degree, with the others. Either they are not worth reviving, or, to be revived at all, they have to be washed, trimmed, deodorised into dulness and nothingness, and as they are presented are but the shadows of their old wilful, brilliant, petulant selves. Practically, therefore, the English classical drama is compact of arrangements from Shakspeare; of Sheridan's *Critic*, his *Rivals*, and his *School for Scandal;* of Goldsmith's delightful farce; of *Money* and *The Lady of Lyons;* of a stray drama of Tobin's, and one or two of the works of Sheridan Knowles; and of certain "comedies" by the younger Colman, whose main use is to show the admirable poverty of the repertory in which they are able to figure with advantage. For the contemporary English drama, it will be enough to say of it that it is largely

Digitized by Google

composed of translations, and that the works of the late T. W. Robertson are in a fair way of becoming as classical as *The Iron Chest* and *The Heir-at-Law* themselves. And it is the thought of many that things could hardly be better than they are. Others are crying out for the establishment of a state playhouse; though it is too late in time for the advent of a despot and the revival of monopolies, and too soon after the Puritan revolution to ask the Government for a theatrical grant. Altogether the English theatre is, for the moment at least, in a bad way. But for Shakspeare, Sheridan, and the dramatists of modern Paris, that way would be worse than it is; and as it is to Molière's initiative and example that the zeal and earnestness of Sardou and Augier and Labiche are traceable, we owe it in some sort to him that our stage is just now so fruitful of amusing spectacles as we know it.

It is possible that without their Molière the French would have been as unhappily situated and as poorly off as ourselves. But Molière came; and the Comédie-Française is his monument, the drama of France is in great part a literature of his making. The Illustrious Theatre was a poor enough little concern; but it was none the less a most important element in the constitution of a national stage. It was a venture to which Molière seems to have belonged from the first, and owed its being to the enterprise of certain *enfants de famille*—hidalgos, sons of somebody, that is. Among them were the three Béjards: Madeleine, Geneviève, and Louis, known to posterity for the connections and the life-long intimates of Molière, and occupying an honourable position among the fathers of the French stage. Madeleine Béjard was a remarkable person in her way. She was a woman of pleasure, a woman of business, a good actress. She was a friend of poets and players; had been a stroller in the southern provinces; had had amours and adventures; could write verses, vamp up plays, keep accounts, make and save money; and was, in fact, as well qualified to manage a theatre as need be. It is said to have been for her love that young Poquelin abandoned his father's house, and transformed himself from a respectable upholsterer into a vagabond and an artist. Be this as it may, it is certain that Madeleine and he were always friends and comrades; and it is certain that, whatever her share in its conduct, the Illustrious Theatre fared miserably, and so long as it remained in Paris was a complete failure. It had the patronage of Gaston of Orleans, and now and then would be admitted to amuse him in the Luxembourg. But it was always wandering between tennis-court and tennis-court, and its normal state was one of hopeless impecuniosity. Molière presently became its chief; and it is to be assumed that Madeleine and he were too intelligent and too much in earnest not to have done their best. But beyond the opportunity he may have had of studying Don Juan and M. Dimanche from the life, and the doubtful honour of arrest for the company's debts, he does not seem to have been in any way advantaged by his Parisian management. It was a change for the

Digitized by Google

better when the heroic unfortunates transferred themselves to the provinces. It is not known what were their circumstances at starting, but the chances are that, for strolling players, they were not ill-provided. Madeleine Béjard had rich friends and an acquisitive habit. It is certain that the elder Poquelin did not let his son go forth into the world unaided. As so many *enfants de famille*, the members of the company would surely have been able to get some money for the common chest. Was not the wardrobe stocked, too, with the cast suits of the Duc de Guise? Then there were carts to buy and beasts of draught to hire; lackeys and carters were necessary; trunks and bedding were indispensable, and something must certainly have been spent in scenery and in saucepans. I cannot believe that the Illustrious Theatre removed into the provinces as poorly stocked and plenished as an ordinary gang of strollers. Money breeds money; and Molière's genius and Madeleine Béjard's hard head notwithstanding, the company could scarce have become so opulent as it did, had it not been decently equipped at the beginning.

In the cities of the west and south the Illustrious Theatre soon made itself a reputation. It played tragedy, of course; for tragedy in the France of those years was the noblest of the theatrical art. It played such comedy as it might; and the comedy of the period was abundant if it was not particularly choice. It had not achieved its final form, but was mixed in quality and varied in intention. Sometimes a dash of romantic bravado, a flavour of heroics and adventures, gave proof of its Castilian origin; and then it was compact of escapades and disguises, of magnanimous tirades and tremendous situations, of "breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades," of Beauty in distress and Valour to the rescue. Or, again, it was a masque of antiques newly apparelled; and, speaking a French that owned to the near neighbourhood of François Rabelais, the Soldier, the Parasite, the Slave, the Reverend Sire, the Dissipated Heir, went bragging, and fawning, and moralising, and intriguing, as gaily and frankly about the tennis-court stage as when they had uttered rare Terentian Latin and the rich and copious Roman of Plautus. Or, again, it recalled the Italy of Machiavelli and Ariosto; it was rank, impudent, witty; it anticipated the manner of play that has its modern home at the Palais Royal. As for farce—ridiculous and noisy and obscene—as it was sketched out by contemporary translators, and as the chief of the company soon began to understand it, it was a speciality with the Illustrious Theatre; Molière and his comrades got much of their provincial popularity by its presentation; it was with a farce that they were afterwards to lay the foundation of their favour at Court. It is to be conjectured that they lived a not unpleasant life. George Sand, dreaming of Molière in her eloquent, sentimental way, saw in this part of his career an endless opportunity of picnics, romantic interviews with the victor of Rocroy, and prophetic yearnings towards little Armande Béjard. Dassoucy, the wandering virtuoso—gamester, mu-

Digitized by Google

sician, buffoon, blackguard—once had the luck to winter with the members of the Illustrious Theatre, and cherished the memory of the experience ever afterwards. In the greater towns, they would "take up their pitch," as the slang of the highway has it, for weeks and even months at a stretch. To the strollers of those years an empty tennis-court was what the piece of waste land or the open market space is to the showmen and circus people of these; and in some tennis-court—the Bottle, or the Star, or the Golden Cross—the stage would be erected. Thrice a week there was advertisement by tuck of drum; and of an afternoon the good burgesses and their wives, the rufflers and soldadoes, the young fellows longing for a taste of life and things Parisian, would flock toward it; and, by the light of tallow-candles in chandeliers of lath, the *Scévole* of Pierre du Ryer, or the *Visionnaires* of Desmarets, or Corneille's own *Pompée*, or *Illusion Comique*, would be represented, "with good accent and good discretion." The local nobleman would come in state, and sit out the performance with the critical air of one familiar with the intonations of Floridor, and with anecdotes of Mondory in his palmy time. Sometimes, too, he would receive them in his own ancestral manor. There, beneath

> Les tourelles en poivrière,
> Et les hauts toits en éteignoir,

in the great hall hung round with tapestries and antlers, Molière and his fellows must many and many a time have played their parts as actors and as students both. In the little burghs and chief places there would always be both room and welcome for them. They were doubtless one of the sights of every fair within the limits of their circuit. Now and then they would have for audience the Estates in person, when they might requisitionise men and horses for the service of their caravan, and when all the notables of the province, reposing from the labour of squabbling and self-government, would come to the theatre, with all ceremony and splendour, to laugh at the actors, and flirt with the actresses, and comport themselves generally as became their high lineage. I do not doubt but the porter of the Illustrious Theatre had now and then an exciting time, when swords were drawn and cudgels flourished, and the brawlers who would have seen the play for nothing had to pay miserably in their skins. I do not doubt but there were romances acted not a few that had nothing theatrical about them but their brevity and the profession of one or other of their chief personages. Was not Mdlle. Du Parc so fortunate as to capture the heart of Corneille at Rouen fair? Are there not wild stories extant as to the exploits of Molière himself? Have not actors and actresses exercised, from the days of Thespis downwards, an irresistible influence on the hearts of their audiences? It is more to the purpose to remember that the company, which varied greatly as to its constitution, became excellent in its art, and that its ten or twelve years' sojourn in the provinces must have done it, and after it the French stage, invaluable service. The Illustrious Theatre had the whole

Digitized by Google

provincial society of southern and western France to consider and take pattern by; and it made good use of its opportunities. Molière must have known the two Diafoirus, father and son, at Montpellier, where Thomas attended the schools, and his sire was practising for himself. Before he saw the noble sportsman who is said to have stood for the Dorante of *Les Fâcheux*, he had had to listen, at the inn or after the play, to scores of little Nimrods. He had come up with the

> Franc campagnard, avec longue rapière,
> Montant superbement sa jument poulinière,
> Qu'il honorait du nom de sa bonne jument,

of Dorante's pathetic narrative on the king's highway, "grand benêt de fils" and all. Charlotte and Mathurine and Pierrot, Martine and Sganarelle, Lubin and M. Tibaudier, Léonard de Pourceaugnac and Georges Dandin, M. Jourdain and Madame d'Escarbagnas and La Rapière, Nicole and Jacqueline, and the amiable family of De Sotenville, seem to be so many sketches from the life. It is at least as certain that their poet made them for actors who knew the originals, and could fill out his sketches from their own store of experience and observation, and who were thus qualified to be the founders of a tradition living and respectable even now.

In the provinces Molière appears to have made friends of the kind who could be helpful at Court. There, too, he laid the foundations of his literary fame with a couple of the most famous of romantic farces, the first of which, *L'Etourdi*, is held by no less a man than Victor Hugo to be, in point of style, the best thing he ever did. Things were therefore ripe for the return to Paris in 1658. It is an old story how the king's favour was won with *Nicomède* and *Le Docteur Amoureux*, and how the Illustrious Theatre, taken under the wing of Philip of Orleans, became Monsieur's company of players forthwith. Monsieur's players were made happy in the promise of a yearly pension of 300 livres, and had the use on off-days of the Italian Theatre in the Hôtel du Petit-Bourbon, once the property of the traitor Constable, and with the hangman's mark in yellow paint on it even then. Clever and new as they were, they could not for some time make money as they must have made it in the provinces. As yet the manager was not even that "man named Molière, who writes plays that are not devoid of wit, and is by no means an uncommon actor, unless 'tis of the ridiculous," of Tallemant's note. To the public and his rivals he was at first a very ordinary personage. Afterwards, to those of the Hôtel de Bourgogne at least (for with the Italians and the actors of the Marais he was on good terms), he got to be sometimes hateful, sometimes contemptible, suspicious always. Like Liston, he seems to have thought he was a great tragic actor; at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, rich in the services of Floridor and Montfleury, of Hauteroche and Beauchâteau, they thought he could not play tragedy at all, and said so. Afterwards, when he was making money and winning favour, several poetasters were put up to make fun of him, and

Digitized by Google

though these gentlemen were answered victoriously in the *Critique* and the *Impromptu*, the old grudge rankled till the end. It was not till the upstart manager had been dead a year that, in Brécourt's *Ombre de Molière*, the Hôtel consented to say a good word for him. In his coffin he was somebody to be admired and even regretted; on the stage, and producing such trifles as *Tartufe* and the *Ecole des Femmes*, he was a buffoon, a plagiarist, a Georges Dandin, an atheist, and anything vile you please. It must be owned that by the action of dying a great artist completes his fame in several senses. Meanwhile, things were but at the beginning, and for a long time it was uphill work. La Grange was not a member of the company for some months after its installation at the Petit-Bourbon. His first six quotations of receipts are of 250, 155, 182, 175, 176, and 120 livres; his tenth, a Saturday's, is of 72 livres only. There were ten in the company, six actors and four actresses, and expenses had to be paid ere any one could touch a penny. As far as Paris was concerned, it must have seemed as if, for all its change of name, the Illustrious Theatre had made no sort of change in its fortunes.

But Molière was not, it would seem, in any way discouraged. At the Easter of 1659 he increased his company to twelve. Three of his people left him, and he took on five others in their place. Among these was La Grange.

II.

La Grange was of respectable Picard stock, and had received a decent education. He was the youngest of three children, who were orphaned at an early age, and suffered the usual wrong at the hands of the usual guardian. His sister became a nun; La Grange records her death a good many years afterwards in his *Registre*. He and his elder brother Achille went out into the world as strolling players. Acting, as I have said, was a gentlemanly calling, and the two young Varlets were nobodies and nameless. They chose, therefore, and took to themselves, sonorous titles, and became respectively Varlet de Verneuil and Varlet de la Grange thenceforward and for ever.

Of the feats they did, or did not do, under the impulse of these noble denominatives, history says no word. They may have served the turn of some wandering charlatan, and on a stage of planks and trestles have mimed and fooled into attention and sympathy the audience that collected to laugh at their master's lecture and avoid his wares. The famous Tabarin was an artist of this type. At the foot of the Bronze Horseman on the Pont-Neuf, it was Tabarin's to droll and sing his public into credulity and good humour. Then his brother, the imposing Mondor, gorgeous in plumes, and spangles, and broideries, would draw teeth, and let blood, and put off orvietan, and heal-all. It is more probable, however, that MM. Varlet de Verneuil and Varlet de la Grange had a soul above drugs, and were attached to a strolling company of some sort, combined for the presentment of the legitimate drama. They may even have been members for a while of the Illus-

Digitized by Google

trious Theatre itself. La Grange's editor, with a touch of sentimentality that does him credit, is anxious to see proof for as much in the terms the discreet and useful creature uses about the *Etourdi* and the *Dépit*. But La Grange himself (who, indeed, is niggardly of every kind of information but the essential), says nothing about his strolling days. I can imagine that, for more reasons than one, the memory of this part of his life was distasteful to him. There were strollers and strollers; and if the Illustrious Theatre was the opulent and roystering concern it is believed, you have but to read Scarron's *Roman Comique*, and to remember Edmund Kean and his breakfast of raw turnips, to know that the medal had its reverse, and that that reverse was unattractive. Reading Scarron's novel is like rummaging an old lumber-room, shut up for ages, and full of broken boots and empty bottles, of greasy fripperies and dishonourable potsherds. Destin, the hero, is introduced in a nightcap twined with garters, a doublet of hodden gray belted with a strap, and the poor breeches and buskins he wears on the boards. He has a long gun on his shoulder, and is canopied with the pies and crows he has been shooting for the common dinner, and with some purchase in the shape of a gosling or a fowl. Beside Destin trails an old rascal burdened with a bass-viol. Their waggon is drawn by four lean oxen and a mare with foal; it is heaped high with boxes, bundles, and rolls of painted cloth; and a young person clad anyhow is perched on the top. The ostler falls foul of the primitive actor at the mare's head, before he has been a minute at the inn-door. And when these scarecrows put before their first audience the famous tragedy of *Marianne*, they have no curtain but a dirty, borrowed sheet, while Destin discourses as Herod, in Mondory's vein, on a mattress for a bed royal, and crowned with a basket. Through a squalid pell-mell of broils, and drinking-bouts, and abductions, the story scrambles to its close. There is plenty of cudgelling and love-making, and plenty of the brutality that used to pass muster for an expression of the Comic; and, making all allowance for the tendency to exaggerate and overcharge of the professional buffoon who wrote it, it portrays a way of life that is nothing if not noisy, miserable, sordid, repugnant. For a humorist and an observer like Molière, and for a vagabond sworder like Brécourt, strolling, under certain circumstances, had doubtless its interest and its charm. But La Grange, as revealed in his book, is a highly respectable person; he is a man of method, conduct, thrift; and it is not surprising that for himself his career as a player should begin at the Petit-Bourbon. La Grange the stroller is some one to be forgotten; La Grange the actor, attached to Monsieur's company, is some one who may keep a diary and record, with decent pride, a daily minute of the sums he earns and the plays in which he earns them.

How he began and what he played at the Petit-Bourbon nobody knows. His first appearance among Monsieur's players was at the Castle of Chilly—"Ou Monsr le Grand Maistre donna un regal au Roy." The piece was the *Dépit;* the receipts were of 400 livres; after payment of

Digitized by Google

expenses, the actors got some 24 livres each. The diarist has no more to say than that. Some weeks afterwards the company played the *Etourdi*, and "Monsieur Béjard fell ill and could scarce get through his part." Monsieur Béjard died in some eleven days; his decease is signified in the diary by the marginal introduction of the first of the coloured lozenges used by La Grange as a specific sign of death. It is probable enough that La Grange stepped into the dead man's shoes, and became the *jeune premier* of Molière's company forthwith. It was not till the next November, however, that he had a chance of creation. Then, under the rubric "Troisieme piece nouuelle de Mr. Molière," he is found noting the production (at ordinary prices) of *Les Précieuses Ridicules*—the frolicsome farce designed to mock the silly creatures who were aping the eccentricities, linguistic and sentimental, of Catherine de Vivonne and the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Herein he breaks ground in his own name. The Seigneurs La Grange and Du Croisy open the ball together, while Molière and Jodelet are getting on their braveries in the dressing-room, and Madelon and Cathos are making lip-salve, and Gorgibus is waiting to come on with Marotte. The receipts that day are of 533 livres, and each actor gets 43 livres for his share. La Grange does not think it worth his while to add that the whole Hôtel de Rambouillet was present, nor that the play was sent to his Majesty in the Pyrenees. Of the legendary old man, with his "Courage, Molière! voilà la bonne comédie!" the prudent Seigneur makes no mention; nor is it anything to him if Ménage did, or did not, talk to the poet of the *Pucelle* about adoring what they had burned and burning what they had adored. What's Chapelain to him, or he to Chapelain? It is more to his heart that, next Tuesday, prices are doubled, and the *Précieuses* is played to a house of upwards of 1,400 livres, so that he and his fellows take as much as 121 livres apiece. Indeed, the famous farce was a little gold-mine to Monsieur's company of players. In casting up his accounts, La Grange is able to note that between April 25, 1659, and March 12, 1660, he has received the sum of 2,999 livres 10 sous: a wage that, considering the relative values of money then and money now, is as good as a rising player not long out of his teens could wish.

With the *Précieuses* La Grange's career as an actor of original parts began in right earnest. From that time forth the great comic poet wrote nothing in which he had not a capital share. To Molière he was what M. Delaunay, one of the most charming and accomplished of his successors, has been to Augier, and in a posthumous sense to Musset. Time wrought no change in the relations between this most able comedian and the noblest of all theatrical managers. Molière was ousted from the Petit-Bourbon; but La Grange went over with him to the Palais Royal. Catherine le Clerc was discrowned for Armande Béjard; but La Grange made love to Armande Béjard as he had made it to Catherine le Clerc. And though young Baron, in the prime of beauty and genius that were to make his name one of the most famous in theatrical story, was for

Digitized by Google

some time a comrade of La Grange's, and played one part that might have been his elder's, he interrupted the other's avocation but for an instant, and left him in the unimpaired exercise of his function. In its exercise La Grange continued till the end. His histrionic physiognomy is as marked and individual as Molière's own. He is the general sire of classic stage-lovers. In the full if somewhat narrow world of his chief's achievement it was his to smile and whisper always. His were grace and elegance and distinction, the hero's eyes of youth and golden voice, the exquisite things to say and the goodly things to do. On the boards his life was that of the conventional incarnation of Comeliness and Passion. He stood for the terror of husbands and of guardians, the idol of generous waiting-maids, the dream of amiable and secluded heroines. To a simple-minded observer from the pit the trade he plied is the most captivating imaginable. Black Care, if he sits on the lover's hilts at all, sits there invisibly and has Laurelled Victory for his apparent companion. Night after night to win Beauty in the teeth of Jealousy and Suspicion; night after night to go to bed with a wedding-march in your heart and the plaudits of sentimental audiences in your ears; to be Romeo to an endless line of Juliets; to be for ever free of silken ladders and myrtle balconies—to do these things is to have, to all appearances, a time of gold. There are many who would like to be Shakspeare; there are more who, at least at certain moments, would as lief be Charles Kemble. It is a fine thing to be able to *make* Benedicks and Mercutios; it sometimes seems a far finer thing to *be* Benedick or Mercutio. The poet creates; and so far as he is concerned, the pleasure of creation is the only one he has. It is other guess-work with the actor. Nightly, for some three hours or so, he is a glorified edition of his author and himself. He is all the poet's fancy painted, and he is so actually and tangibly. He is the realisation of a gorgeous imagining, and withal the cynosure of a whole houseful of delighted eyes and the admired of all observers. His poets may be Shakspeare or Molière themselves; but it is excusable and not unnatural if for an instant he inclines to hold himself their equal. They, after all, are responsible for no more than the outline, the skeleton, the unfinished sketch; and but for him their ideals would be merely so much ink and paper, the rough notes of a fleeting vision, the *précis* of a vague, impracticable hallucination. I should add that I believe this statement of the actor's feeling for his authors to be in no way overcharged. An eminent comedian* has but now asserted that, in the case of second-rate writing, the actor is to be credited with all the beauties of the thing acted, and that the poetaster's obligations to his player are incalculable. And though it is not question in this gentleman's discourse of either Molière or Shakspeare, still I cannot but believe that the sense of collaboration is present in the best of their interpreters as strongly, in some sort, as in those of Colman, let me say, or Eugène Scribe.

* M. Constant Coquelin, of the Comédie-Française.

Digitized by Google

La Grange is often spoken of as Molière's favourite actor. This is only true in a certain limited sense. Molière's favourite actor was Molière. You have only to read to see that the great playwright, however charmingly he wrote for his follows, was a true actor in this—that in most of his plays he kept the best part and the lion's share for himself. He took care of La Grange, it is true, as he had taken care of Mademoiselle de Brie, as in a far greater measure he took care of Mademoiselle de Molière, as he took care—more or less—of all his company. But he believed in himself not less as a comedian than as a poet. If he wrote such incomparable parts as Sosie and Mascarille, as Pourceaugnac and Alceste, he wrote them primarily for his own acting; and I cannot help thinking that he held the scene a good deal the richer for his presence. He was a wonderful stage-carpenter, however, and he so contrived things as usually to approve himself an artist in construction. His work is always exquisitely balanced. It is not less certain that he is the principal figure, and that his is the best and most conspicuous part, than that this is never so at the cost of art, or even of effect. He does not focus into his single person all the interest, dramatic or histrionic, of a situation or an act. He is content with keeping himself *en évidence;* and when his theme requires it, he gives his companions every chance of acting their best with him, and of acting it, from the sentimental point of view, to his confusion and disadvantage. On the stage he had no dignity but the artist's; his position might be as absurd as you please, so long as he could make right histrionic use of it. Only twice has he the *beau rôle*, and that he has it even then appears to me referable to certain theories outside his usual practice as a player. It was a fancy of his to believe that the emphasis and dignity of tragedy were peculiarly suited to his means; and he had original and just ideas, not accepted by his contemporaries, on the subject of heroic elocution. As it seems to me, *Don Garcie de Navarre* and the *Misanthrope* may have proceeded in some sort from a desire of indulging his humour of seriousness, and a determination to example his elocutionary theories in verse that, without being actually tragic and heroic, should have a something in it of the tragic and heroic quality. In *Don Garcie* he failed signally, both as an actor and as a poet. The nature of the play may be described as metaphysico-romantic; and its author's genius, a genius of comedy—of spiritual realism, that is to say; refined, abstracted, intellectualised, but still realism—was ill at ease and uncertain of itself in such an environment. The thing, moreover, is ill-made, wordy and dull; and the wonder is that Molière, with his admirable artistic instinct and his exquisite good sense, should have thought so well of it as he did. In the *Misanthrope*, which is a veritable drawing-room epic, he succeeded. In itself the purest comedy, in intention as in execution, it has for its central figure a personage who is none the less comic that there are in him the possibilities of tragedy. In the presentment of the passionate impulses of Alceste and the delivery of his wrathful tirades, Molière found, I think, his

Digitized by Google

opportunity as a tragic actor—as years and experience had modified his belief in himself as a player of heroic parts—and his opportunity as an exponent of elocutionary reform. Apart from Alceste and Don Garcie, his histrionic practice was almost wholly grotesque. In the parts he wrote for himself not less than in the structure and conduct of his plays, there are everywhere vestiges of the jovial Neapolitan tradition. A pupil and admirer of the famous Tiberio Fiurelli, it is natural to find that one of his chief merits must have been a merit of pantomime and facial expression. His parts are scored with opportunities of dumb show. He has often nothing to do but look on in silence, and it is not to be doubted that his silence was eloquent of absurdity. It was his way of reposing himself without leaving the scene, and at the same time of giving his actors their chances. You can imagine what such an actor would make of Arnolphe listening to Agnès in the *Ten Maxims;* of Orgon hanging on the lips of Dorine, when she gives him news of his Tartufe—"le pauvre homme!" of Trissotin battening on the praises of his quire of bluestockings; of Sganarelle bedevilled with imaginings of impending horns; of the hero of the *Mariage Forcé* struggling with the volubility of Pancrace and the sententiousness of Marphurius; of Georges Dandin in the presence of his father-in-law; of Pourceaugnac under the compliments of Sbrigani, trying to understand his brace of doctors, fearing and fleeing the charge of apothecaries, hearkening with bated breath to the gibbets and tortures of the two Switzers. For the rest, it must be owned that, as acting parts, these and most of the other creations of the great comedian are of extraordinary merit in every way. In them, as in nearly all that Molière made, whether for himself or his fellows, you feel the hand of the actor-dramatist: of the artist in histrionics as well as in writing; of the perfect stage-poet who knows how to make a play that will act as well as it will read, how to make a character, not only for the closet, but for the boards as well. That Molière has been for over two centuries a living influence upon the playwrights and dramatists of his country is owing not much more, I take it, to his genius as a comic poet than to his consummate skill as a craftsman. It is the duty and the pride of every Briton to scout the notion that he is at all comparable with Shakspeare; and from certain points of view assuredly Shakspeare is immeasurably his superior. But if it be a question of scenic tact and skill, then Shakspeare disappears; the honour and advantage are Molière's, and his incontestably. He knew exactly what he wanted, and exactly how to get it; and as both he and Shakspeare wrote originally and primarily for the stage, it is only fair that their achievement as mere playwrights should sometimes be compared. The comparison is easily made, and tested not less easily. We do not know and cannot realise our Shakspeare as he was to himself and his contemporaries; we have to adapt him ere we play him, to cut in this place and rearrange in that, to eke out his attractions with everything in the way of costumes and scenery that art can devise or money buy. At the Théâtre-Français they

Digitized by Google

play their Molière act for act, scene for scene, line for line, dress for dress, decoration for decoration, as he was played two hundred years ago at the Petit-Bourbon and the Palais Royal.

III.

Molière's "young first" could have been but one or two and twenty when he assisted the Seigneur du Croisy to confound the daughters of honest Gorgibus. He could have been but four or five and thirty when, "vêtu galamment et en amoureux," he enchanted his contemporaries in the last of the Molieresque masterpieces; and in bearing his part in the duet with Angélique-Molière made an impression that is audible even yet. The work in question, the *Malade*, is perhaps the costliest play ever put upon the stage. It killed Molière, to begin with; and the expenses of production were so large as to be in part unpaid when Lulli turned the King's company out of the Palais Royal, and forced it to set up for itself at the Hôtel Guénegaud. When Molière died, La Grange had been for some six years his orator and acting manager. It was the orator's part to come before the curtain and make announcements, or ask indulgence, in a neat little set speech, flowered with compliments, and couched in terms sufficiently conceited and rhetorical; and the actor chosen for the employ had to be a good artist and a public favourite. The great Bellerose, the respectable Floridor, did orator's duty at the Hôtel de Bourgogne; Mondory had been bellman to the Marais; Molière was long his own trumpeter at the Palais Royal, and probably at the Illustrious Theatre also. If bill-posting were suddenly to become a lost art, Mr. Irving would certainly take it on himself to be the orator of the Lyceum. La Grange must have been one of the best orators of his time. He studied the part under Molière; he continued its exercise at the Hôtel Guénegaud; finally, he was the first of the orators of the Théâtre-Français. Samuel Chappuzeau, whose book about theatres he is suspected to have inspired, speaks of him not less garrulously than enthusiastically. "Although," says Samuel, "he is but of middle height, his presence is good, and his air is easy and elegant. You are charmed by his person before he opens his lips. . . . . As he has a great deal of fire, and of the decent boldness an orator should have, it is a pleasure to listen to him when he comes on to speak the compliment; and that one with which he regaled his audience at the opening of the King's Company's Theatre (the Hôtel Guénegaud) was in the best taste imaginable. What he had excellently contrived was spoken with marvellous grace." I hope that this pleasant description does its subject no more than justice. As La Grange was not only a charming orator, but also an admirable actor, a good judge of literature, and a better of the public taste, a most intelligent and capable man of business, and an excellent advertising agent—it must be owned that he falls not far short of being an ideal theatrical manager. It is no wonder that under his guidance the Hôtel Guénegaud, unassisted from without, should have

Digitized by Google

flourished so as to have become a chief factor in the constitution of the Théâtre-Français. The theatre was not always prosperous; theatres seldom are. But La Grange worked hard, and was not at all scrupulous as to his expedients. He kept alive and in honour the tradition of Molière, and he tickled his public with melodramas and spectacles. It was at his bidding that Thomas Corneille made havoc and verse of *Le Festin de Pierre*, and, classic as he was, he had as good an eye for current scandals as the playwright attached to a modern waterside theatre. Events showed how thoroughly he knew his business. The year of the *Devineresse* (1679), a comic melodrama on the adventures of Madame Voisin, was worth 1,100 livres more to him and the old Molierists at his back than the great and profitable year of the *Imposteur* itself. Monetarily, the Hôtel Guénegaud was successful enough to make the translation of Mademoiselle de Champmeslé a change for the better in the famous actress's position. She was the mainstay of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, which was ruined by her secession; so that La Grange may be held to have avenged his old manager's wrongs as brilliantly and completely as need be.

Soon afterwards the companies were fused. After 1680 La Grange's story is that of the troublous early years of the Comédie-Française; for he took his place at the helm of the new society as naturally as he had in the Palais Royal and the Hôtel Guénegaud. He had to negotiate affairs with the Dauphiness, for some time vicegerent of the theatrical kingdom. He was the recipient and exponent of that order from the Duc de Créqui which took away the liberties of the little corporation, and gave it over to the gentlemen of the Chamber. With the rest, he became a servant of the household. The weekly meetings for the discharge of business were his institution. The practice of admitting actors to the Comédie stage for an appearance on trial was introduced by him. He it was who fought the society's battles with the unlicensed playhouses of the fairs. Finally, it was his to conduct the tedious and toilsome series of negotiations, which ended (1687) in the players being permitted to buy land and build a house of their own, the first possessed by the Comédie-Française. His life was always mannerly and decent. An entry in the books of the great theatre, dated 29th February, 1692, speaks of him as at his post and busy as usual. "The pensions, counters, and arrears," it says, "are in the keeping of M. de la Grange." He died next day: of grief, the story runs, for the conjugal misfortunes of his only child. He was fifty-three years old. His brother, Achille Varlet de Verneuil, once a stroller with him, and afterwards his comrade at the Hôtel Guénegaud, and as an associate of the Théâtre-Français, lived on, a pensioner of the house, till 1707. As he left a fortune of 100,000 livres, it is conjectured that he and M. de Verneuil recovered a portion of the paternal estate.

He does not seem to have been happily married. His wife, a daughter of Ragueneau de l'Estang—pastrycook, poet, player, candle-snuffer to a

Digitized by Google

company of strollers—was plain of face, had no talent, and was an arrant flirt. For Armande Béjard, otherwise Mademoiselle Molière, otherwise Mademoiselle Guérin, the heroine of a thousand public love-passages, he had till the last a regard that may have been touched with sentiment, or may not, but that was certainly unaffected and sincere. It was at her request that he edited and published (1682) the first complete Molière; and the authorship is claimed for him of the neat and pleasant little biography prefixed to it. The work by which he is best known, however, is his *Registre*—a professional diary he seems to have kept for his own uses. It covers a space of twenty-seven years, and is of unique interest and authority. It remained in manuscript for near two centuries, but a costly edition has been issued by the Comédie-Française, and it is now within reach of everybody. There is no portrait of La Grange in the museum of the famous playhouse he helped to found; but the publication of this record of his life-long endeavours has done more to popularise his name than a score of portraits. No more curious monument of human carefulness exists in letters.

It is the skeleton-history of over a quarter-century of theatrical work, and reveals its author for the least personal and most punctual and methodical of men. A fine arithmetical sentiment breathes from its pages; they prove La Grange to have been a kind of banker born with a genius for acting. To me the association of his orderly, split-farthing private habit with the gallant and passionate part he had to play on the stage, has an odd enough effect. I confess that it costs me an effort to think of thrift and an eye to the main chance among the braveries of Léandre, and to picture Lélie a good hand at a bargain. The genuine Byron notwithstanding, I should as soon look to have a fourpenny-piece in guerdon from Haroun-al-Raschid as to find in Don Juan a heaven-born cashier, or have it brought home to me that under the plumes and ruffles of the Dorante who lies so magnificently there is harboured a complete understanding of the rules of compound interest. Mario, not unhappily described as "one of the triumphs of the male sex," with a million a year off the stage and on it, must always remain the ideal, the heroic type, of the *grand premier rôle;* and Mario is only histrionically a descendant of La Grange. That honest and excellent actor would have made as honest and as excellent a cheesemonger. Nothing commercial escaped him; scarce ever did he remember anything merely private or individual. Like the rest of his contemporaries he lacked the sense of picturesqueness; unlike the most of them, he had no turn for either sentiment or scandal. How Molière dressed the Sganarelles; how the De Brie comprehended Agnès; what of art and nature there was in Hubert's Madame Jourdain; if the Du Parc really did desert her manager for a young poet called Racine—to these questions and their like he returns no answer. It is characteristic of him that, although he was an actor, the memory of his own artistic achievements is as indifferent to him as that of every one else's. So far as I remember,

Digitized by Google

he mentions himself as a player but once; and he was made to do that by falling ill of "une fieure continue double-tierce" (whatever it may be), and having "deux rechuttes." "Je fus deux mois sans jouer," he adds, aggrieved and pathetic, as becomes an honest man who cannot earn the wage he is receiving; "M. du Croisy prist mon rosle d'Eraste." Is it not evident that he does not care a straw whether M. du Croisy's Eraste is better or worse than his own; that he has little or nothing of the true actor in him except the talent for acting? After this surprising proof of his impersonality, it is needless to add that he says nothing of his part in that famous festival (1664), the Delights of the Enchanted Island. He might have told us a great deal about that circus-like apotheosis of regal gaiety, if he would; for he had the honour to figure therein as Apollo. Most actors would give their ears to be able to talk of a time when, "'brillants de lumière,' they had saluted royalty from a noble chariot, driven by the Sieur Milet (the king's coachman, and naturally 'the best in the world') as Time, and adorned by Mdlles. de Brie and Molière as the Bronze and Golden Ages, and by the Sieurs du Croisy and Hubert as the Ages of Silver and Iron." But La Grange is less an actor than an animated account-book, and his share in the Delights awakens no memories in him but of the 268 livres 10 sous, he earned by it. And of his journey to Lille, on behalf of the *Tartufe*, he merely remarks that he and La Thorillière left Paris ("en poste" in an addendum) on such and such a day, that they were "très bien receus," and that they returned in due season, and began playing once more. It is true that he sets down regularly—each under its peculiar rubric: of ring, or diamond, or crosses interlaced—the births and deaths and marriages among the company. But they seem to have a commercial significance to him; he regards them in the same light as the new pieces whose production he records; they touch the company in its business welfare, and touch it home, or, I think, he would not mention them. Once or twice he departs from his rule, and is, so to speak, shaken out of himself and his peddling habit and attitude. When Ratabon, the architect, expelled Monsieur's players from the Petit-Bourbon, and inadvertently and against his will did Molière the best turn possible, La Grange was greatly incensed. He speaks of Ratabon's scandalous behaviour in terms that, for him, are really passionate. He relates how he and his fellows refused all offers from other theatres, and swore to stand by Molière to the last. "All the actors," says he, "were fond of their chief, the Sieur de Molière, who, besides his extraordinary merit and capacity, had so much kindliness and such a taking way as obliged them, one and all, to protest that they would share his fortunes, and would never leave him, no matter what offers were made them, nor what the advantages they might reap away from him." Again, recording a performance before Mazarin, he is moved to remind himself how, all the time, the minister lay sick in his chair, and how the king, who looked on "incognito, appuyé sur le dossier de la chaise de S. E.," went every

Digitized by Google

now and then away into a great cabinet. But these entries were written in his hot youth, and while some touches of boyishness may yet have leavened the sedate practicality of his mind and temper.

Such outbursts of violence do but throw into higher relief the commercial blankness of the pages in which they occur, and into which they seem to have somehow come astray. In his way La Grange is none the less an invaluable man. He has a keen eye for the price of candles, if he has none for the aspect of the house they lighted. He is as careful to note the discrepancy between his allowance for clothes and their actual cost, as he is careful not to note what were their colours and fashions. Racine's poor treatment of Molière is interesting to him under its monetary aspect if under no other. He is, in fact, a prince of book-keepers, and his *Registre* is a very mine of documents and accounts, and of amounts and dates. The moneys received and expended are set down by him religiously. It is all one whether his entry refer to the price of a set of battered sconces, or to the increment from an entertainment at the Louvre. He notes with an impartial hand the "nine livres given in charity to an unfrocked and revolted cordelier," and the expense of removal from the Palais Royal to the Hôtel Guénegaud. He books the worth of a new play as dispassionately as the vintner's little account for its rehearsals, the bills of carpenters and chairmakers, the shoemaker's note for new pumps and the ballet-master's for a new ballet. From April 28, 1659, the date of his first appearance among Monsieur's players, to August 31, 1685, the date of his last entry—an entry in connection with the Théâtre-Français—there is not a single performance, in the theatre or out of it, but he records, to a fraction, the gross receipts and each actor's share in them. The help this monumental exactitude has been to students of Molière and his times can hardly be told. As a document in the theatrical sociology, indeed, the *Registre* is priceless. Lost, there would have been a gap in the story of the world's first stage and of one of the world's best artists.

W. E. H.

Digitized by Google

Eppelein von Gailingen.

Heisa aufgeschaut!
Wem graut vor Strauss',
Der bleib' zu Haus;
Eppela-Gaila zieht zu vierzehnt aus,
Eppela-Gaila von Dramaus!—Old Ballad.

The scene of our present sketch is laid in Germany; the action of our romantic drama—which is based partly on living legend, partly on the records of old chronicles and archives—plays itself chiefly in and around Nürnberg. The date is the fourteenth century.

The state of Germany in that age was anarchic, chaotic. The Church, the Kaisers, the Fürsten, nay even the Imperial Free Cities—whereof there were then some hundred and six—were all, in a rage of strain and storm, struggling together, each force opposed to the other in a wild welter of disordered conflict. Out of the collision of these warring elements was pressed into life the order of *Raubritter*, or Robber-Knights: men of birth who elected to live, in a lawless age, by saddle and by sword; who sought gain by masterful spoliation, and strove for glory by despiteful deeds of arms. The *Raubritter* was a natural product of his land and time. The younger and wilder nobles pressed into the career—for such it then was—with joyous eagerness, and without much sense of shame or wrong—they may almost be called crusaders of crime; and indeed they very often sublimated their wild life with a strain of knightly daring and warrior-enterprise. Many of them were, naturally, mere coarse common robbers, greedy and cruel; but there were some who surrounded the perilous avocation with chivalry, and ennobled it with romance. That one of the *Raubritter*, who is the best type of the nobler sort—Eppelein von Gailingen—forms the subject of the present narrative.

England has her Robin Hood, Scotland her Rob Roy, and Germany her Eppelein. The latter, too, is still a name and a fame. I was the other day in his Franconian country, and found his memory still very full of life. At Nürnberg they show you the site of his famous leap for life, though the city wall is now much higher than it was in Eppelein's olden day; in Rothenburg on the Tauber his name is still a household word, while at Muggendorf, in the fair Franconian Switzerland, they point out to you the ruins of Eppelein's ancient castle. You can hear from peasants an account of some of his many exploits; and the reputation of Eppelein remains a popular romance.

Herr Franz Trautmann has brought together, out of ballad, legend,

Digitized by Google

and chronicle, a pleasant volume which presents some picture of its hero; and to Herr Trautmann and his book I owe acknowledgment and thanks.

Eppelein von Gailingen was no mere robber. If he had been only that, the popular interest in him would not survive as it does.

You see in Germany many a ghostly ruin of an olden castle which still retains feeble hold of a name of its own, but enshrines no memory of a now forgotten owner—the rough robber is forgotten so soon as the life is beneficently knocked out of him; but the mixed characters of men like Robin Hood or Eppelein live yet in story and in song.

It is difficult for us to realise the actual, tangible law of might which ruled in the fourteenth century; a might which had to be encountered or died under; and yet we must try to conceive this sway of force if we would understand the Middle Ages and the robber-knight. The "Kings of the Romans," the Emperors, were far too busy with their own concerns to think of protecting the life or property of the trader travelling on the highway; indeed some Kaisers—such ones as Ludwig the Baier, Karl IV., Günther von Schwarzburg—were really *Raubritters* on an imperial scale. It is clear that Eppelein did not think his profession any disgrace. He was indignant at the misdeeds of Church and State, of Kaiser and of Pope. He always held himself to be an "honourable knight;" he never broke his knightly word; he was furious against the "slanderous tongues" that called his followers *Staudenhechte* and *Schnapphähne*—"pikes-in-the-wood," or "snatch-cocks."

Bravest among the brave, he had a wisdom that could guide his valour to act in safety; he was capable of courtesy, generosity, chivalry; he was always gentle to women; he had a keen wit and a humorous power of strong sarcasm. There was also "the grace and versatility of the man." He loved adventure, and courted danger for its own fierce sake.

Had Eppelein found an honourable career in noble wars, or in national politics, his singular qualities and his distinguished prowess would have won for him a royal name; but his times were against him, and they drove him to become—the thing that he was.

Thus much premised, I pass on to show you something of our tarnished hero as he lived and died. I shall try to place before you some vital picture of the first and greatest of the *Raubritter*. His own deeds —and misdeeds—will depict Eppelein best.

Early in the fourteenth century, the good knight, Arnold von Gailingen was lord of the Castles of Illesheim near Windsheim, of Wald near Gunzenhausen, of Trameysl (or Dramaus) near Muggendorf, and of Gailingen, his *Stammschloss*, which latter was situated near Rothenburg on the Tauber. His wife was named Apollonia, and he had two sons, one of whom was a monk at Würzburg, while the other pursued the *Kriegshandel*, or trade of war, in far lands. The soldier-son, following his trade of war, procured himself to be effectually killed in

Digitized by Google

some one of those far lands; so that Arnold's two first-born sons did not yield him an heir to his name, his honours, and his Castles. However, in or about the year 1311, the Frau Apollonia proposed to make her husband once more a father. "If," said the good lady, "my coming child be a girl, it shall be a nun; if a boy, he shall be a monk." Father Isidorus, the resident Castle chaplain, warmly approved the pious resolution; and Arnold, his wife being weak, did not dissent. In deep winter, in the Castle of Illesheim, Apollonia was safely delivered of a son. They called his name Apollonius, which means, being interpreted, Eppelein; and this infant became Eppelein of Gailingen and his father's heir. The mother had a bad time, and the infant was, at first, to all appearance, rather weakly. "He will make a good monk," they thought; but when they said this in the child's hearing, he (as chronicles record) raised a great cry, kicked and threatened as if he were angry at the very idea of becoming a monk. When Eppelein was christened, he, so soon as he felt the touch of water, uplifted a terrible shout that frightened all that heard it; he nearly upset the christening vessel, and behaved so violently that all were astonished. In this line of conduct, however, Eppelein resembled the infant who afterwards became the Emperor Wenzel, and who, when baptized in the St. Sebaldus Church in Nürnberg, comported himself in the like uproarious manner. Arnold remarked, as he watched his child's behaviour, "I should almost doubt whether this boy will ever make a monk." The little Eppelein soon ripened into a strong and sturdy boy. When he was about six years old, his great delight was to take down from the wall his father's sword, and to swing it about. He tried to draw on his father's heavy riding boots and spurs; and when Arnold rode out on "Black Adam," the boy insisted upon riding in front of his father on the great war-horse. At ten, Eppelein could ride "Black Adam" almost better than his father. The boy never knew fear. He would catch wild, unbroken colts by the mane, swing himself on to them, and gallop furiously round the meadows; nor could the fiercest horse ever throw the boy. He sat as if he had been molten on to a horse. Arnold did not wish to pain his wife, and therefore held his tongue before her, but he was often heard to mutter, as he watched Eppelein, "They will never make a monk of that boy." Himself an old *Haudegen*, the knight had a secret joy in his son's strength, and daring, and unruliness.

Frau Apollonia was a weak and pious woman. Given such a lady of it, and the Castle is like to be ruled by a priest; as, indeed, was the case with all Arnold's many Castles, in which the Father Isidorus, while maintaining a decent show of respect for the good knight, was practically almost supreme. The education and control of the young Eppelein were confided to the priest, but without good results. Eppelein soon detected that the father was selfish and a hypocrite; and the boy rose in revolt against the priestly rule. Eppelein would obey only Arnold, who seldom interfered between priest and scholar, but, with a smile, let them fight it

Digitized by Google

out between them, though Isidorus was always complaining of the boy, and urging Arnold to punish him. The quarrels between Isidorus and Eppelein became fierce and frequent; and the lad played his reverend tutor many evil tricks. One day, after some mischievous prank, the incensed father, after calling Eppelein a *heilloser Gesell*, pulled the boy's ears, receiving in return a blow which nearly knocked him down. "How can you honour my father and mother," asked Eppelein, "when you take their son by the ears?" "A pretty monk you'll make!" roared the enraged chaplain. Eppelein, who generalised too rapidly, conceived an unhappy dislike to the whole body of the clergy. If monks or priests were coming to the Castle, he took away the plank, or tree, by which they had to cross the river; when they reached the courtyard, he let loose all the great dogs of the Castle, and fastened all the doors. Twice, when Isidorus went to the cellar, for purposes no doubt innocent in themselves and certainly conducive to his comfort, Eppelein locked him in, and the father could only get let out by frantic knockings and callings. On another occasion the boy glued together the leaves of the father's breviary. Isidorus did not find out this trick for some days, and the boy pointed out that the priest must have neglected his duties for at least that period. Arnold and Apollonia were induced to scold Eppelein, who, in consequence, resolved to be further revenged upon Isidorus, and accomplished his purpose in this wise.

Eppelein began by upbraiding the father for setting his parents against him. "Verruchter Gesell!" shouted the angry priest; "if I did not know you to be the son of your pious mother, I should hold you to be an imp of satan!"

"Ah!" returned Eppelein, "you abuse my mother, do you? Very well, you shall pay for that. I have a mind to line your cap with pitch——"

"I'll take care," roared the father, "that you shall have no chance. You shan't get my cap into your mischievous hands. See—I'll put it on at once." And he hastily did so. But Eppelein had been beforehand with him, and the cap was already lined with pitch. Isidorus could put it on, but he could not get it off again. He roared for help, and they tried to pull off the cap, but it stuck fast, and the father's howls were so piteous that they had to leave it where it was, and indeed it remained there for many a long day. Isidorus carried his woes to the Lady Apollonia, and she urged her husband to interfere. Arnold was really angry; he had just put his foot into the stirrup of "Black Adam," but he turned back, moved by his wife's tears, and called to a *Knecht* to bring a stick. Eppelein wrenched the stick out of the man's hand, ran downstairs, sprang upon "Black Adam," and rode away. He was then twelve or thirteen years old. When he reached the great wood near Trameysl, he dismounted, and began (for he was a boy still) to pick and eat bilberries. "Black Adam," who was like a dog with Eppelein, waited by and grazed contentedly.

Digitized by Google

Presently Eppelein heard voices, and creeping through the brushwood, he saw a large band of riders, headed by his father's chiefest enemy. He listened, and found that they were lying in wait for his father, intending to kill Arnold, and then to seize his castle. Noiselessly did Eppelein return to his noble horse. He led "Black Adam" over the sand, in order that the horse's hoofs might make no noise; then he remounted, and rode swiftly back. On his road he met Arnold, mounted upon the chestnut, and told him all.

Now when Isidorus saw father and son ride into the courtyard, the good man's heart swelled with joy, for he thought that Eppelein had been caught, and was brought home for condign punishment. However, it was another matter that had brought the pair home, though Isidorus did not yet know it. "Gottvergessener Gauch!" he cried out to Eppelein. "Now you shall learn what it is to maltreat a holy man! You shall be locked up for days; you shall be——" "Silence!" cried Arnold, who had to think of more serious matters; and it was boot and saddle in the Castle yard, where all the riders were soon mounting, under arms, while the Castle prepared for a defence.

Eppelein suggested that a *Knecht* should be sent out, disguised as a peasant, should let himself be caught by the enemy, and should then tell them that Arnold was away from Trameysl, and would not come home for many days.

This was done. Arnold's foes were overjoyed. They postponed their attack until evening, and detained the sullen peasant to lead them in the dark to the Castle—which, he, unwillingly, did.

Things did not, however, fall out quite as they had expected. Just as they reached Trameysl, Arnold, Eppelein, and all the riders fell upon them from behind, and defeated the foe with such slaughter that only five remained alive.

This was Eppelein's first knightly deed of arms, but he did well and worshipfully, himself unhorsing and wounding two *Lanzknechts*. When the fight was over, said Arnold, as he wiped his sword on the mane of Black Adam—and he said it proudly, too—"That boy will never be a monk!"

Some ten years rolled on, and Eppelein developed rapidly. He could keep his own counsel, and carry out his own will. He was feared and liked by the soldiers and the tenants. All said, "The lad has as much character as courage, and will come to be a puissant knight; but a monk —never!" One day his father Arnold died; and shortly after, Frau Apollonia prepared to follow her husband. *Es fehlte ihr im Magen und im Kopfe*—she suffered in the head and in the stomach—and the simple leechcraft of Isidorus could not avail. He mixed, and administered to the good lady, all the draughts that he knew of; but even this treatment did not help; and Apollonia died.

So Eppelein became lord, and this was his first act of mastery:—

He sent for Isidorus, and said, "You have caused me many a bitter

Digitized by Google

hour. You set enmity between my parents and me; and more than all"—here Eppelein's anger rose high—"you would have made a monk of me! All is ended between us. I am now master here, and you shall not remain another hour in my halls. Go!"

Now you may think that this was not pleasant for Isidorus, who, as priest and *protégé* of the lady of so many Castles, had for long years borne sway and influence, had had an easy life, with free run of cellar and buttery, and who saw himself turned out by the young lord, and relegated to meagre fare and to some sort of work. So he pleaded, and offered to pray for Eppelein, who, however, remained inexorable. Then Isidorus, who was of a heavenly temper, gave way to it, and emitted an impromptu commination service, brief but intense, which contained prophecies of evil and malignant denunciations. This, also, did not help, and the discomfited priest left the halls of the young Knight of Gailingen.

Eppelein's next step was this. He sent out his trumpeters to all the Castles round about to invite the knights and junkers to a great banquet. Some stayed away; but the noble, swelling spirits, the young and wild springalds of nobility, all came, and were royally entertained by Eppelein at Trameysl.

Eppelein's position was this:—He was young, strong, proud, brave, eager for adventure, desirous of glory. He had a hearty hatred of priests and Jews; he loathed hypocrisy; he had a knightly scorn of traders, of usurers, of money-changers; and he held in contempt Bürgermeisters and Town Councils. Hence he determined to live by the saddle and the sword, *i.e.* to become a *Raubritter*, or robber-knight. Such a man had not much of a career open to him in Eppelein's land and time. Of the sea he could know nothing. In the distracted anarchic condition of Germany there were no political causes that could present a field for his energy and enterprise. He believed—or believed that he believed—that his pursuit was not unworthy of a knight fired by love of glory, and he embraced it with a serious joy. There was, in Eppelein's complex nature, a strong love of romance, of daring for its own sake; and he loved the right—as he understood the right. Among the wild spirits who came to Trameysl we find the names of Ruban von Neuerstein, Fritz von Gattendorf, Hans von Krähenheim, Götz von Jachsberg, Albrecht der Eisenhut, Hermann von Nest, Kress von Peillstein, the two Kämmerers, Fritz der Walch, Ditmar von Roth, two Bachensteins, and the two von Bernheimer. Last and worst, fiercest and fellest of all the company, was Wolf von Wurmstein, already known as "the wild wolf;" and these reckless young nobles formed themselves into a band of knightly robbers, with Eppelein von Gailingen as their chief. They were strong enough to set the cities at defiance; and they had no imperial opposition to fear.

The new band soon made itself felt and known. No highway in Franconia could be travelled in safety, nor did it help that the traders

Digitized by Google

engaged escorts of mercenaries. When a merchant rode out of any city gate, the mob chanted—

> Komm g'sund nach Haus,
> Der Nürnberger Feind reit' aus,
> Eppela-Gaila von Dramaus.

It soon appeared that the free Imperial city of Nürnberg was the object of Eppelein's peculiar detestation. It was full of priests, Jews, traders, usurers, town-councillors—the people that most he hated—and the city was very rich. What woe he wrought to Nürnberg, what scoffs and mocks he put upon it, we shall soon see. Above all his contemporaries of the sword, Eppelein soon made himself a distinctive name in the land. His daring, skill, generosity, romance, became the theme of general talk and popular rumour. Hated by the classes that *he* hated, Eppelein was well loved of the common people. Never did he any harm or wrong to poor or simple folk; indeed, he often did good to them.

Now, of Eppelein's many exploits I can only relate a very few. It would need a book, and not a mere article, to tell you all the wild, daring deeds of this fearless *Raubritter* of the fourteenth century. Eppelein had, as I think you will soon see, a strain of fierce, practical humour, as of misdirected chivalry, in the ardent nature driven by disjointed times to such a lawless life. If "ower bad for blessing," he was, at times, certainly "ower good for banning." He never broke his knightly word; he conceived that he was doing wild right and rough justice; he often helped true love; he was not murderous or cruel, even to prisoners; and though fell in fight, he killed only in hot blood. First, I will tell you of a pleasant adventure. *Es ist zu wissen*, as the quaint old chronicles say, that there was then in Nürnberg a very wealthy burgher, Tetzel by name, who had one fair daughter that he loved passing well. Agnes was proud of her beauty and her wealth, scorned all her suitors, and declared that she would only marry a nobleman. Thereupon Eppelein wrote to the *Rath*, offering through them to Agnes his "ritterlich höchsteigene Hand." He added that if Agnes should marry any Nürnberger he should levy a fine of 8,000 gold gulden upon the city, and would, moreover, have a kiss from the bride. Nürnberg answered angrily, but feared to let Agnes marry any one. When her father had wished her to marry, Agnes would not; but when he wished her not to marry, the wilful beauty decided to marry, and proceeded to fix her affections strongly upon one Ulrich Mendel, a proper young fellow, though scarcely quite attaining to Agnes's original standard of nobility. However, from dread of Eppelein, the marriage of Agnes and Ulrich was postponed. Suddenly the news came to Nürnberg that Eppelein was sick unto death. He sent to the city for Doctor Rehm, the great physician, to whom Eppelein promised a large fee and a safe conduct. The *Rath* gladly sent the Doctor to Trameysl, but intimated to Rehm before he started, that he need not go out of his way to cure Eppelein.

Digitized by Google

Dr. Rehm found his patient very weak and very red in the face. This latter symptom, however, Eppelein had brought about by taking a mighty draught of strong wine. The Doctor felt the sick man's pulse, shook his head, and said: "You have the burning fever, and will probably die. You must repent of all your sins and prepare for death. Still I will see what I can do;" and he prepared a draught for the sick man. "Drink, Eppelein!" said Dr. Rehm. "Rascal!" cried the patient, springing out of bed; "do you think I don't know what you mean? How little you know! I am quite well. You shall drink that draught yourself; if it be poison, you will be served right; if it be harmless it will do you no harm!"

No help for it. The doctor made a wry face, but he drank. Then it occurred to Eppelein to make further experiments in medicine, and he mixed all Rehm's drugs into one draught, and made the doctor drink *that*. This nearly finished the wretched physician, who was removed in a very uncomfortable condition.

As Rehm had been sent to him, the news of Eppelein's death was easily believed. A black flag floated over the castle, and traders began to crawl out of Nürnberg. Tetzel and Menzel sent away a large cargo of valuable goods, but the caravan was waylaid, and a person, recognised by his comrades as the dead Eppelein, said gaily, "We have the 8,000 gulden and more; now I go for my kiss. Hide about here and wait my return, in case I should bring friends from Nürnberg with me."

The wedding-feast of Agnes and of Ulrich was merry and was splendid. Ulrich said it was a double festival, and celebrated both his marriage and Eppelein's death. "Do not be too sure of that," said a venerable old man among the guests. "I hear that Eppelein has been seen again."

Now the bride, who was curious and anxious, went to the venerable old man to inquire further, when suddenly, to her surprise, she was passionately embraced and heartily kissed. Off went white wig and beard, and the rest of the disguise; out flamed a bright keen sword, and the guest, no longer old, cried: "I have had my money, I have had my kiss! I am Eppelein! After me who lists to follow." He sprang upon his horse, and rode thundering over the bridge at the *Frauenthor*. Then there was mounting in hot haste, and the enraged Ulrich and the Nürnbergers rode, as they might, after the bride-kisser. Eppelein kept ahead, but did not ride so fast as usual. Presently he whistled, and from copse and shaw came forth the Wolf and the riders of Dramaus. Eppelein tied Ulrich to his horse, gave him in charge to two *Knechts*, and said: "Sir Bridegroom, we shall soon meet at Trameysl. I always keep my word. You will know Eppelein again!" Then Eppelein returned to the joy of fierce fight. The Nürnbergers retired sorely discomfited, but Ulrich remained Eppelein's prisoner.

The next day Eppelein wrote, in stately fashion, to the *Rath* of the praiseworthy free city of Nürnberg. He said two friends of theirs, Dr.

Digitized by Google

Rehm and Ulrich Mendel, were on a visit to him; but, though the air at Dramaus was good, both seemed rather to pine for Nürnberg, and would gladly return home, which they could do so soon as praiseworthy free city aforesaid should have paid for them a little ransom of 4,000 gold gulden. This ransom Nürnberg paid forthwith, and recovered her citizens; but Eppelein had his kiss, his glory, and his gain.

It is to be noticed that neither Dr. Rehm nor Ulrich had been at all ill-treated while they were prisoners; though the Doctor had—perhaps deservedly—been subjected at first to some rather tempestuous playfulness.

And now you shall hear the story of Eppelein's great leap for life; a leap such as, perhaps, no other horse and rider ever took.

There was a certain Jew in Nürnberg, called Elias, who, like Isaac of York, dealt, among other things, in armour and in horses. Now this Jew had for sale a certain matchless horse, said to be the best in all Germany; but there was one objection to the peerless grey, that is, he was so wild and fierce that no man could mount and ride him. The *Burggraf* wanted the horse, and Eppelein, you may be sure, who could ride any horse, wanted such an one sorely.

Elias sold the horse to the Burggraf for twenty gold gulden, but when Eppelein made offers for the steed, a plan of treachery occurred to the cunning Jew, and he offered, for 2,000 gulden, to deliver Eppelein into the hands of the Nürnbergers. The Jew reasoned well, because Eppelein was so fond of a good horse, that he forgot his usual caution. So Elias said he would bring the gallant grey to Forchheim, that Eppelein might see the horse; and Eppelein went there eagerly and unattended. At Forchheim, Eppelein did not find the horse, but he found an ambush of Nürnberg *Lanzknechts*, who succeeded in seizing Eppelein, and in carrying the great *Raubritter*, securely bound, into Nürnberg; that is, to certain death. He was borne into the city on the shoulders of the spearmen, and the mob, which had always pictured Eppelein as a kind of terrible devil, was surprised to see a handsome cavalier, gay, confident, bold. Eppelein knew his danger well; but he kept his wits about him, looked round him (specially at the city walls), and maintained a cheerful, debonair demeanour.

Eppelein was taken before the Burggraf, who, with Bürgermeister, Rath, patricians, soldiers, and much people about him, sat on horseback in the great wide *Schlossplatz*, or open ground below the *Burg* of Nürnberg.

"Eppelein of Gailingen," said the Burggraf sternly, "we have caught you at last; and for your many misdeeds you must prepare to die the death!"

"Burggraf," replied Eppelein gaily, "I love life as well as any man, and I don't think that I shall die to-day."

Then Elias, the Jew, stood forward. With spiteful glee and deep malice, he told the story of his treachery: he claimed the 2,000 gulden, and the payment for his horse.

Digitized by Google

"Burggraf," said Eppelein, "may I see this horse before I die? I am accounted a good rider, as you know, and it may chance that I could tame a horse that none other can ride!"

"Agreed!" cried the Burggraf. "And you, Eppelein, shall decide whether I am to pay this Jew for a devil's horse that no man can ride. Bring forth the horse!"

And the horse was brought snorting, and stamping, and foaming, into the open space. Several grooms led him, and they were all afraid of him.

Eppelein looked at the grey with a born horseman's joy. Never had he seen such force and fire; such spirit, strength, and speed; and then the creature was so beautiful! "The very horse for me!" thought Eppelein, "and I will have him, too!"

"Mount, if thou darest, Eppelein!" said the Burggraf. "Unbind him, *Knechts*, and lead him to the horse!"

And then they saw a strange thing. Eppelein showed no fear; he patted and stroked the horse, which seemed to know his master, and suffered Eppelein to approach and touch him. In a moment Eppelein had hold of bridle and of mane, and with one vault, he sat firmly in the saddle. The horse neighed, and plunged, and kicked, but Eppelein sat as if the two had been moulded in one casting. Erect and fair, the cavalier kept his seat; and the wild horse, leaping high into the air, in furious bounds, flew round and round in circles, which Eppelein took care to widen. The people drew back, and suddenly Eppelein, seeing the way clear, headed the horse for the city-wall, struck him with the spurs, and at one wild leap cleared wall and moat, and stood safe outside Nürnberg!

The Burggraf could not restrain his admiration; but the astonished soldiers soon rushed to the wall, threw spears and discharged cross-bows at the mocking horseman, who sat, laughing and jeering at them, on the horse that he alone could ride. "I can throw a spear better than you!" cried Eppelein, as he snatched one out of the ground and hurled it through the arm of the Jew Elias. "Burggraf, you need not pay for the horse. I alone can ride him! And you need not pay the Jew for my capture, for I am not captured—I am Eppelein! Adé!"

And he turned and fled like the wind. Never had he felt such a horse beneath him. It was not long before he was safe in Dramaus; having acquired a matchless horse that he alone could master and could use.

And that wild horse became as celebrated throughout Franconia as was his yet wilder rider, Eppelein von Gailingen.

But the traitor Jew came badly off. He was not paid for Eppelein, or for the horse, but he was banished from Nürnberg on pain of death, and fell into the hands of Eppelein.

"You have well deserved death at my hands!" said Eppelein with a dark scowl, "but fear not, Elias, I will be merciful. You shall have

Digitized by Google

a safe conduct, and a ride into Nürnberg as my messenger. Bring out the wild boar!"

And Eppelein wrote a letter to the Burggraf and tied it to Elias, and the Knechts tied Elias to the wild boar. They prodded the beast with their spears, and drove it toward Nürnberg; and so, amid the loud laughter of the wild followers of the *Raubritter*, Elias, who had caused Eppelein such a desperate ride, began an unpleasant ride on his own account. Arrived in the city, more dead than alive, Elias yet duly delivered Eppelein's letter. The knight of Gailingen stipulated for the Jew's life, but added, that he had more generosity and was a better Christian than the Nürnbergers were, for he had spared the life of a man who had sold *his* life for a price. The letter ended: "You shall soon hear more from Eppelein."

The Rath was sorely perplexed at this threat, but they spared the life of Elias, and the Jew escaped safely to his own people, in Poland, Hungary, or Bohemia. And so Elias vanishes from this history, and the fame of Eppelein von Gailingen, and of his wonderful horse, waxed ever greater in the land.

Love came to Eppelein, as it does to all men. He loved Kunigunde von Wurmstein, the sister of his friend "The Wolf." Kunigunde was of noble birth, was beautiful and high-hearted; but at first she refused Eppelein, saying that his way of life was too dangerous, that she should always be anxious, and might be left an untimely widow. All is fair in love, and Eppelein planned, without changing his way of life, to convince her of his reformation by extracting a marriage-gift from Nürnberg. He wrote his request to the Free City, but the reply was that Nürnberg would not give him a *Spatz*—a sparrow. He replied that if they would not give him a sparrow he would take their singing-birds. He rode disguised into Nürnberg, entered the Treasury, put their portable gold cups and the like into a sack, which he shook and rattled to "make the birds sing," and rode safely off. When Kunigunde received her wedding present, she told Eppelein that if he had yielded to her request she would never have accepted him, that she loved his fame, and admired his life of wild adventure. "Henceforth," said the lady, "your friends are my friends, and your foes are my foes." So they twain married, in great splendour, at Dramaus. They were well suited to each other, and lived very happily. Kunigunde died in a few years, leaving one son, Johannes, who promised to become a second Eppelein, but was killed in fight when quite young, falling with his face to the foe, and with all his wounds in front.

The favourite horse did another great feat. Eppelein was in Nürnberg on some private business connected with a merry mock at the Rath, when, as he rode out, he was recognised. Seventy-two *Lanzknechts*, under their captain, sat ready mounted in the market-place, and were sent in hot pursuit after Eppelein. Then there was galloping! Eppelein flew by the St. Lorenz Church, and out of the *Frauenthor*, with

Digitized by Google

the Nürnberg riders in full chase after him. Many a Nürnberg horse broke down and dropped out of the race, but Eppelein's grey flew as if he would never tire. Before Eppelein lay the Main, wide and swollen, in flood. He did not hesitate, but leaped the grey into the fierce current. Never heavier man and horse stemmed a swollen river's course; but while the spearmen stood watching on the one bank, Eppelein reached the other bank safely, dismounted, lay down on his back, and mocked the baffled Nürnbergers with many a merry jibe. Eppelein was so pleased with the noble horse to which he owed this escape that he had a gold bridle made for the steed, and washed its hoofs daily in wine.

I could—but cannot for want of space—tell you many more exploits of this famous knight. Once he preached in Nürnberg, and when he told the congregation at last who he was, they found all the church doors shut, and could not catch him. Then Nürnberg, when Eppelein was away, turned out with all its force and tried to burn Trameysl. Eppelein returned in time, though with but a small force, and beat back the Nürnbergers with great bloodshed. They had, however, burned down a part of the Castle, and but for the peasants, who loved "Eppa-Gaila," would have wholly destroyed Dramaus. Eppelein threatened revenge, and he always kept his word. During a mighty tempest of great wind he set fire to Nürnberg, and burned down 400 houses. It happened, in 1343, that Nürnberg was visited with the "Black Death," and with a terrible dearth and famine. The people were dying miserably of sickness and of starvation, so that it was piteous to see and hear of. Now there was a certain usurer who had bought great stores of corn, which he held back that he might sell his stock at an enormous profit when the poor people should be driven by hunger to pay any price. Had Eppelein known anything of political economy he would have recognised that such dealing was a natural and beautiful transaction; but he was ignorant of the "dismal science," and what he did was this. First he himself warned the usurer, who denied having any corn, but when, a few days later, the usurer thought it safe to drive his corn to Nürnberg to market, Eppelein's riders seized the cargo and gave it away to the poor, starving people, who, indeed, loved "Eppa-Gaila" well—better than they loved Burggraf, or Bürgermeister, or Rath. He interfered once to make the course of true love run smooth. An old man, one Muffel, who was very rich, had got the consent of the parents of a pretty girl, and the marriage was being forced on. Now this girl loved, and was loved by, a nice young fellow, and Eppelein interfered to help the lovers. He so frightened old Muffel that the hunks gave up the girl, and the young lovers were happily married.

Once when Eppelein was in Nürnberg, a rumour got abroad that he was in the city. All the gates were closed, and a mounted band was got ready in hot haste to pursue. While they were preparing, Eppelein went and took one of those peculiar baths which were then held to be

Digitized by Google

good for the liver. As the riders went forth Eppelein rode with them, and when they got sufficiently far away he turned to them and said: "O you dullards! Why don't you catch the poor soul? The bath has done me good, and I am minded to gallop. Do you know him when you see him? No? Well, I am Eppelein!" and he turned and fled like the wind. "They'll have fleet steeds that follow, quoth young Lochinvar." And the riders did *not* catch Eppelein, who arrived, laughing, at Dramaus, after a healthy gallop, which, no doubt, assisted the action of the bath.

When the troubles in Nürnberg were at their height, the poor people, maddened by misery and wasting with sickness, got hold of the idea that the Jews had poisoned the wells, and then began a cruel persecution of the unhappy Israelites. Eppelein, I grieve to say, inflamed popular passions against his old enemies the Jews, and he is partly to be blamed for the ill-treatment to which they were subjected. One day, riding near the city, Eppelein saw an unhappy Jew, one Jäcklein, followed by some citizens who wished to ill-use, or perhaps kill the Hebrew. Moved by some impulse of pity, Eppelein interfered. "Now that I have saved you, what will you do?" asked Eppelein, and Jäcklein begged frantically to be allowed to enter into the knight's service, and to live and die there. Something in the man's manner touched Eppelein, who trusted in the Jew and granted his request. Jäcklein was found astute and active; he was always eager and bitter whenever anything was to be done to injure or insult Nürnberg.

Ah! there is so much to tell—and yet I must leave so much untold. It is pain and grief to me to have to pass over so many things in silence; but I must just tell you of the meeting between the Kaiser and Eppelein.

On the occasion of the Burggraf's marriage, Karl IV. honoured the nuptials with his presence, and there were great feastings, and mummings, and maskings, and Eppelein, you may be sure, in good disguise, was one of the gayest there. He rode in the cavalcade, and rode so well, "witching the world with noble horsemanship," that people cried: "Why, that cavalier rides like Eppelein!" And the bride said to him: "How I should like to see that brave Eppelein!" and he replied: "Fair lady, you shall see Eppelein, that I promise you. But you may see him and yet not know that it is Eppelein. Remember what I have said to you!"

The bride dropped her glove, and Eppelein, returning it to her with knightly grace, asked her to ask the Emperor to grant him two favours. She consented, and she asked the Emperor to do what the courteous stranger demanded, and Karl readily promised to do as the bride wished. Thereupon Eppelein and the Emperor talked long together, and Karl was charmed with Eppelein's bright, bold wit. Then Eppelein preferred his first request; it was that Karl would give a gold gulden to Hans von Lobenstein.

Digitized by Google

The Emperor laughed loud and long. "Thou art a nobleman, though it may be a poor one," said Karl. "The gold gulden shall be paid; but yet I have a mind to lay thee in the tower for thine audacious talk and bold request."

But the Emperor could not do this, because he had given his royal word for the stranger's safety. So Eppelein bowed and vanished, and shortly after the Chamberlain handed to the Kaiser a letter. It was from Eppelein, who said that a good *Knecht* should always, so far as possible, imitate his master; that he did, so far as he could, imitate his Emperor, who pawned and pledged cities and towns, took spoil, and sack, and plunder wherever he could seize them. The writer did the same thing also. He had pawned Nürnberg to Hans von Lobenstein for a gold gulden, and was, for the information of the Kaiser and the bride—EPPELEIN. Karl laughed rather grimly, but the fair lady knew that she had seen Eppelein without knowing that he was Eppelein, and she thought with pleasure of the stately figure and bright face of the renowned robber-knight.

This Jäcklein was a Jew who was consumed with a fierce hatred of the oppressors of his race. He used Eppelein to obtain vengeance upon the Nürnbergers, and he meant then to use Nürnberg to be revenged upon Eppelein. He was the second Jew—Elias was the first—who treacherously sought to betray the *Raubritter*.

One day Jäcklein stabbed Eppelein's favourite horse, took another from the stables, and on it rode into Nürnberg, and proposed a plan for Eppelein's capture. The Rath listened to him and trusted him, so great was Nürnberg's hatred and dread of Eppelein.

Jäcklein denounced all Eppelein's adherents in the city, and these unfortunate persons disappeared into the *Froschthurm*. At the cold feet of the Iron Virgin yawned a deep and dark *oubliette*. . . .

Eppelein was beside himself with rage, and swore to have the life of the traitor Jäcklein. The Jew meanwhile vanished from the city, and the Rath began to suspect his honesty.

One day a man rushed into Nürnberg calling out that Eppelein was taken! What had really happened was this. Jäcklein caused it to be intimated to Eppelein that he, the Jew, was hidden in a certain village. Eppelein called for his horse, and with the two Bernheimers and four *Knechts*, rode off at once, bent blindly upon vengeance.

Arrived at the village, Eppelein and his followers rode straight to the inn in which they expected to find Jäcklein. The landlord, who was in the plot, asked them to hide themselves in the house till Jäcklein, who was looked for every minute, should arrive.

So Eppelein fell into the wily Jew's snare.

While the Bernheimers and Eppelein sat drinking in the inn, crowds of armed men gathered round the house, and they drew up nine waggons across the front of the door.

Eppelein heard the sound and hum of a mass of men, and he soon

Digitized by Google

became aware of the trap laid for him. The Bernheimers and the four Knechts tried to escape by the back of the house, but they were surrounded by numbers and made prisoners.

Eppelein mounted his horse—not, alas! *the* grey—and issued forth alone by the front gateway of the inn. The great crowd, which bristled with spears and swords, raised a shout when they saw the terrible Eppelein appear mounted before them. He saw his danger at a glance. Crying out "Freedom or death! You shall not easily take Eppelein!" he put his horse at the waggons, hoping to cut his way through his foes. The horse sprang over eight of the waggons, but could not clear the ninth, and crashed down upon the pile. Then Eppelein on foot, with only his sword, stood facing that host of enemies. They wanted to take him alive; he wished to die if he could not escape.

The fight—Eppelein's last fight—began. This man, alone amongst that crowd of enemies, did prodigies of valour. He is said to have killed or mortally wounded twenty of his foes, but the fight was a fight of utter desperation: he fought, not for life, but for death, and the odds against him were too terrible. He was borne down, seized and bound, and carried away to Neumarkt.

In the fight Eppelein had cloven Jäcklein through the skull. The fanatic of revenge perished by the sword of the master he had betrayed.

The long career of success had come to a violent end. The *Raubritter* were condemned to die; and on a fair summer morning, Eppelein and the two Bernheimers stood upon the high scaffold in the market-place of Neumarkt. An enormous crowd raised upturned faces to the lofty platform. Nürnberg was defrauded of its show, and Neumarkt rejoiced in the horrible spectacle.

The Bernheimers perished first, by the shearing sweep of the headsman's broad blade, and then Eppelein was broken alive on or by the wheel. He refused the services of a priest. In his day of pride and power he had always been wont to say that "a man should live as a free and mighty hero, and should die without fear." He had laboured to live up to his theorem of life, and he certainly bore his death of slow agony with the calmest courage.

When the head was gone the members were no longer dangerous. Wolf von Wurmstein succeeded to the command, but the dreaded band, which Eppelein had led so long and so successfully, soon melted away. Some perished by the sword of the foeman, others by the sword of the headsman. Many disappeared, and the highways of Franconia were freed from the terror of the great robber band.

So ended the wild life of the chivalrous criminal, of the most renowned robber-knight, EPPELEIN VON GAILINGEN.

S .

Digitized by Google

The Regicides of this Century.

Kings and Emperors have been so many since the world began to form itself into states, and they have naturally had so many enemies, that one is inclined to marvel that so few of them should have perished by assassination. There have always been occasions of which a determined man could approach the person of the best guarded monarch; and so the fact that sovereigns are generally well protected has little to do with their comparative immunity. But it is noticeable that attempts against rulers are usually made when society is in a perturbed state, and the popular respect for supreme authority has got weakened. Thus feeble-handed or well-meaning potentates who sought the good of their subjects, have been more exposed to criminal assaults than downright tyrants; and it is very seldom that the murderer of one of them has in any way benefited the popular cause. It may be suspected that most regicides have been madmen; on no other supposition can one explain the habitual short-sightedness of their calculations. Louis Philippe, of France, had his life attempted nineteen times. He was a good-natured, constitutional king, who had no power to harm a soul even had he wished to do so, which he did not; and he had a large family of grown-up sons, who were all popular, so that if he had been killed, the sceptre would have passed into younger and stronger hands than his at once. There was no sense in endeavouring to take the life of such a man. His assailants must unquestionably have been persons of weak or crooked intellect; and one may say the same of Hœdel, Nobiling, and Passanante, who within the last two years lifted up their hands against the Emperor of Germany and the King of Italy. The death of William I. could have done the Socialists no sort of good, and that of Humbert I. would not have advanced the cause either of Republicanism or of Clericalism in Italy. The case is somewhat different with regard to Alexander II. of Russia and Alphonso of Spain, who stand in much the same position as Napoleon III. did in France. The head of the Bonaparte dynasty was looked upon as the incarnation of a political system. If he had been killed by the Orsini bombs in 1858, the Empire would have collapsed with him; and so, if Alphonso were to fall before having an heir of age to succeed him, his kingdom would become a prey to all the adventurers who have something to expect from civil war. As to the Czar, the Nihilists are probably wrong in supposing that there would be any vital change in the form of government if the crown were to change hands; but there is room for doubt on the subject, so, if they be mad, there is at least a method in their criminal folly.

Digitized by Google

The first year of the nineteenth century was marked by an attempt on the life of General Bonaparte, who was then First Consul. Two Italians, named Arena and Gerachi, sought to kill him on December 24, 1800, with an infernal machine as he was returning to Paris from St. Cloud. This is the first time we hear of infernal machines. Arena and his comrade had constructed theirs by placing a box charged with explosible materials on either side of the road, and connecting the two boxes by means of a wire, which, when touched by the horses of the First Consul's carriage, was to pull the triggers of two pistols loaded with tinder, and thereby set fire to the explosible stuff. The blow-up occurred as had been expected, and one of the postilions was wounded; but Bonaparte himself escaped without a scratch. His life was twice tried after that, in February 1804 by George Cadoudal and some other Bretons, who threw some grenades under his carriage as he was leaving the Cour du Carrousel in the Tuileries; and on October 23, 1809, by a student named Staaps, who endeavoured to stab him in the garden of the Emperor of Austria's palace at Schœnbrunn. There were many other conspiracies against the Emperor's days, but they were all discovered by the police, and their authors sent to the scaffold or the galleys. Napoleon I. was too much a fatalist to care for assassins, and it is said that even after the attempt of Cadoudal, when he had a very narrow escape, he remained quite unmoved, remarking that he had his appointed work to do, and should not fall till he had done. Considering that Napoleon was an autocrat of the hardest type, and that as a conqueror he had humiliated almost every nation on the Continent, it is not surprising that he should have had a large number of desperate foes; but it is noticeable that the chief attempts on his life were made at a time when his throne was not yet securely established. So long as he was regarded as the master of the world, the awe which he inspired was universal, and murderers seem to have been afraid to strike him.

It would be difficult to explain why assassins almost always fail in their attacks upon rulers. If, as Scott says, "a sinful heart makes feeble hand," we have a reason; but it is not the less remarkable that infernal machines, pistols aimed almost point-blank, and poignards wielded by the hands of men who do not seem to be poltroons, should so generally miss their marks. The conspirators who assassinated the Emperor Paul of Russia on March 11, 1801, went to work in a way that precluded the possibility of failure. They surprised him in his bedroom at night and strangled him with a towel. The high rank of the conspirators, the number of them, and the determination with which they were animated, gave the unhappy Czar no chance. A sentinel who endeavoured to raise the alarm was overcome and disarmed; another who was on guard outside the Czar's room was killed; a page who stood in the way was hurled over some balusters. The murderers acted like men who felt that they were bound to succeed or to die; and they were nerved by the consciousness that the Czar's heir—the future Alex-

Digitized by Google

ander I.—was at heart with them, so that if they succeeded they would not be punished. Besides, Paul II. was a monomaniac who had no friends. The people despised and hated him; the army had no respect for him; and, to make matters worse, the Czar's overt admiration for France and General Bonaparte was regarded as politically detrimental to the interests of Russia by the boyards, who favoured the English alliance. The Russians themselves pretend that the English ambassador had knowledge of the plot against Paul's life, and tacitly abetted it. However this may be, the assassination of the unfortunate Czar cannot be looked upon as an ordinary case of regicide, it was rather a political execution decreed by a *Vehmgericht*, which numbered scores of the leading nobles of the empire.

From 1809, when Napoleon was assaulted at Schœnbrunn, until 1832, when the life of the Emperor Ferdinand of Austria was attempted at Baden, the ruling potentates of this earth lived unmolested. In the meantime, however, the Duke de Berry, eldest son of the Count d'Artois, heir-apparent to the French throne, had been assassinated on the steps of the opera-house by the Republican fanatic Louvel (who plunged a knife between his shoulders), and this murder is believed by some historians to have had a fatal effect in shaking the Bourbon dynasty. It is doubtful, however, whether, had the prince lived until 1830, he could have helped to avert the revolution which took place in that year. He was a kindly disposed prince, but frivolous and headstrong, and it is not likely that he would have opposed the issuing of those dictatorial "Ordinances" against the liberty of the press which cost Charles X. his throne, and led to the accession of the Duke of Orleans, under the name of Louis Philippe.

Louis Philippe, as already said, had his life tried nineteen times. The most famous of the attempts against him was that made by the Corsican Fieschi, in 1835, by means of an infernal machine composed of a number of gun-barrels. This dastardly outrage, committed in broad daylight, while the King was holding a review, resulted in the death of Marshal Mortier and of twelve other persons. Fieschi is suspected to have been the mere hireling instrument of a Republican faction; but he went stoically to the guillotine without having betrayed any of his accomplices. A private soldier named Alibaud, one Darmes, a mechanic, Meunier, a merchant's clerk, Lecomte, a gamekeeper, and Henry, a crack-brained manufacturer, were amongst the other scoundrels who at different times essayed to kill the most peaceable monarch France ever had. Louis Philippe had grown so accustomed to be shot at, that he used to return to the Tuileries after each new attempt in a perfectly composed frame of mind and ready for his evening's work. The anxiety of his family and his ministers were, however, of course very great, and towards the close of his reign he never showed himself in public without a formidable escort of soldiers. By way of taking exercise, he was reduced to walking in the parks of his two favourite châteaux at Neuilly, near Paris, and Eu, in the

Digitized by Google

neighbourhood of Dieppe. Nobody could get near him at either of these two places, and it is not surprising that he spent more of his time in them than in any of the other royal residences.

During Louis Philippe's reign, and the four following years, attempts were made upon the life of Queen Victoria by Oxford in 1840, and by a workman named Francis in 1842; upon the King of Prussia, Frederick William IV., in 1844, and again in 1850; upon the present Emperor of Germany, then military commander of Coblenz, in 1849; and upon Isabella, Queen of Spain, in 1852. None of these attempts succeeded. Oxford, who shot at Queen Victoria while she was passing on Constitution Hill, was clearly a lunatic, and was consigned to Bedlam as such. He remained there about twenty-five years, and whilst in confinement showed himself invariably rational, working industriously as a carpenter, and expressing his deep remorse whenever he was questioned about what he termed his "wicked piece of foolery." Oxford is alive still, but he is residing out of England. Not so Francis, the carpenter, who assaulted the Queen in 1842, and made a large wale on her face. This man died shortly after he had been lodged in St. Luke's Bethlehem. He was unquestionably mad. Nevertheless, after his offence, Parliament passed a Bill enacting that flogging should be inflicted in future upon any one seeking to inflict bodily harm upon the Queen, or to threaten her. It was by virtue of this Act that the young fool O'Connor, who levelled a pistol at the Queen in 1869, was sentenced to be imprisoned for a year, and to receive twenty strokes with a birch. The Queen kindly remitted the whole punishment, and caused the boy to be supplied with funds that he might emigrate to Australia. But within less than a year after he had been shipped off to Southampton, O'Connor returned to England, and was found prowling within the precincts of Buckingham Palace at night, evidently with evil intent. This time he was certified to be out of his mind, and was sent to an asylum, where he remained under treatment four years. He is believed now to be in New Zealand.

The persons of queens ought, by reason of their sex, to be more sacred than those of kings; yet Isabella of Spain, like her royal sister of England, had her life attempted twice. In 1852, while she was attending mass in the Cathedral of Atrocha, at Madrid, a man called Martin Marinos endeavoured to stab her, and would have succeeded, but for the interposition of an officer, who, rushing forward, received the blow on his arm. So violently had the blow been dealt, that the stiletto completely transfixed the officer's biceps muscles, and could with difficulty be extracted. The Queen, when she saw the blood flow, swooned; but the officer, with true Castilian gallantry, borrowed a cloak to hide his wound, and, though faint with pain, claimed the honour of leading Her Majesty back to her carriage. Isabella, before parting from him, made him a knight of her order of "Isabella the Catholic," and appointed him to be one of her aides-de-camp. Four years after this, in May 1856, the Queen of Spain was shot at while driving through the streets of Madrid.

Digitized by Google

A peculiarity about this attempt was that the bullet intended for the Queen passed clean through the two windows of her carriage, shattered the plate-glass front of an engraver's shop, and pierced a portrait of Her Majesty that was displayed for sale in the window. This portrait was purchased by the Queen for 40*l.*, and, magnificently framed in gold, was presented by her as a thank-offering to the chapel of the Convent of Maria de las Misericordias.

From Spain we may return to France, where Napoleon III. was reigning. It was in 1852 that this sovereign's life was tried for the first time; and another attempt was made upon it by a Radical shoemaker in 1853. This year—1853—was prolific in regicidal outrages, for a traitor called Libenyi tried in February to murder the Emperor Francis Joseph at Vienna, whilst in March a soldier sought to dispose of the reigning Duke of Parma, Charles III. Three years passed now without any more crimes of this sort; but in 1856 Napoleon III. was twice put in peril of his life, both his aggressors (Pianori and Bellamare) being Italians. It is said that after the attempt of Bellamare the Emperor took to wearing a shirt of mail under his linen. It was not, however, until after the fearful enterprise of Orsini, on January 14, 1858, that he got to be so seriously unnerved as to live in constant dread of assassination. Count Felice Orsini was not a mere vulgar fanatic, but a gentleman by birth, education, and fortune. An ardent patriot, and a partisan of the unification of Italy, his grudge against Napoleon III. was that the latter, when a political refugee in Italy, had joined a Freemasonic lodge, and sworn certain oaths which, by-and-by, as Emperor, he had neglected to fulfil. Principally as regards Romo, Orsini was furious at seeing the temporal power of the Pope maintained by a French garrison of 18,000 men; and two years before attempting Napoleon's life he wrote anonymously to warn him that the Carbonaro lodges had decreed his death, and that the sentence would infallibly be carried out if the Imperial policy towards Italy were not altered. Had Count Orsini's accomplices —Pierri, Rudio, and Gomez—been men of his mettle and determination, the attempt against Napoleon on the night of January 14, 1858, must have been crowned with success; but they were poor, ignorant cravens, who did their work for pay, not from conviction, and their hearts failed them at the critical moment. Each of them had been provided with two explosible shells, which were to be thrown under the Emperor's carriage as it drove up to the Opera. Orsini threw his two shells, and Pierri one, but the other two men ran off in a fright when they heard the first explosion. The damage done by the shells was ghastly. Five people were killed outright, and nine wounded; all the soldiers of the mounted escort were bruised or scratched; the Emperor's coachman fell off his box stunned on to the carcase of one of his horses, who lay dead; and one of the footmen was blown twenty yards off, with his skull battered in. Meanwhile hundreds of panes of glass in the street had been smashed, all the gas-lamps were extinguished, and in the darkness there

Digitized by Google

resounded an appalling tumult of plunging horses and shrieking women. Lanterns and torches had to be brought out of the Opera, and then it was seen that the Imperial coach was a complete wreck. How the Emperor and Empress managed to escape, with not so much as a singed hair or a cut finger, is nothing short of marvellous. Apparently not daunted in the least by what had happened, the Empress said to the Emperor, "We must go into the house to show them we are not afraid," and a few minutes later the entry of the Imperial couple into their box became the signal for a magnificent ovation, all the spectators rising *en masse* and cheering to the echo.

Nevertheless, from this time Napoleon III. was an altered man. In the following year he undertook the war against Austria, for the liberation of Italy, and ever afterwards he went in fear of his life. Not a coward's fear, for he was a thoroughly brave man, but a fear which the French call *craintes raisonnés*. He expected to be murdered, and took the minutest precautions to ensure that the Government should be carried on by a strong regency in case of his demise. He never went out without leaving directions as to where the latest copy of his will was to be found; and at times, when he was in low spirits, he used to say that he had dreamed he should be assassinated within such and such a time. During the remainder of his reign, all Italians visiting France were required to exhibit passports; and if not persons of undoubted respectability, were closely watched till an excuse was found for expelling them from the country. In despite of these precautions, Napoleon's life was again attempted, by an Italian, in 1863; whilst in 1866 three other intriguers of Orsini's interesting country—Greco, Trabuco, and Imperatore—entered into a murderous plot against his life, which was happily nipped in the bud by the police. There is said to have been another and more mysterious attempt against the Emperor, of which the public heard nothing, except by rumour. A gamekeeper, of the forest of Compiègne, shot at His Majesty while the latter was engaged in a pleasant *battue;* but one of the equerries in attendance on Napoleon discharged both the barrels of his breach-loader into the head of the murderer, and killed him on the spot. So the story runs; but whether it be a true one or not, will probably never be known till some of the secret memoirs of the Imperial era come to light.

During Napoleon III.'s reign there were attempts against King William of Prussia, in 1861, and against the Viceroy of Egypt, in 1869; whilst in 1865 Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, was murdered in the theatre of Washington, as he was attending a performance of *Our American Cousin.* This calamitous event was followed by what some consider as the judicial murder of the Emperor Maximilian, at Queretaro, in 1867, and by the assassination of Prince Michael of Servia, at Belgrade, in 1868. In the meantime the Emperor Alexander II. of Russia had been twice exposed to criminal enterprises—once in St. Petersburg, when he was shot at by a man named Korakasow,

Digitized by Google

and the second time in the Bois de Boulogne of Paris, when he narrowly missed extinction at the hands of Berezowski, a young Polish refugee. But these attempts against the Czar are so closely interwoven with events of the present day that they must be mentioned in fuller detail.

It was to a peasant named Kommissarow that the Czar was believed to have owed his safety when Korakasow fired at him in 1866, but some say that Kommissarow fainted with emotion on hearing the shot, and that it was a woman who first raised the cry that he had stepped forward and arrested the assassin's arm. Anyhow the lucky peasant was loaded with honours and presents. The Czar gave him the title of baron, a palace, an income; and would doubtless have kept him in lasting favour had not this alleged preserver turned out to be a brute addicted to drink, so that he had to be disposed of at length by being sent as lieutenant into a regiment campaigning in the Caucasus, where he is said to have died soon afterwards. As for Korakasow, he was sent to Siberia, and may be working in the mines there to this day for aught that is known to the contrary. The Czar was rather surprised than upset by this man's attempt on his life, for Nihilism had not yet begun to ferment in the land, and Korakasow was looked upon as an isolated madman; but in the following year Berezowski's attempt gave Alexander II. infinite pain. The Emperors of Russia and France were returning together from a review in the Bois de Boulogne when Berezowski—a lad of twenty—stepped forward and discharged both barrels of a pistol at once at their barouche. The pistol exploded and wounded the assassin, but it was not this that saved the life of the Czar. M. Rambaud, an equerry who was riding beside the carriage, happened to see the pistol aimed, and spurred his horse forward just in time to intercept the bullets; indeed, the blood of the wounded charger was sprinkled over the Czarewitch, and made Napoleon III. imagine for a moment that this young prince had been wounded.

It turned out, when Berezowski was put upon his trial, that his father and a brother had been exiled to Siberia for participation in the Polish rebellion of 1863, and this fact saved him from the guillotine. The jury at the Seine assizes tempered their verdict of "guilty" with the finding of "extenuating circumstances," and the prisoner was sentenced to be transported to New Caledonia. Whether he is there now is not exactly known to the public, for one of the first acts of the Government of National Defence in 1870 was to grant him a pardon; and though this act of grace was subsequently cancelled by M. Thiers, some say that Berezowski had already been liberated when the order for detaining him arrived. Others say that Berezowski escaped from Noumea in 1871; others again allege that he died in 1872. Altogether a mystery hangs over the fate of this young man, whom the French Government profess to be still holding in durance.

Berezowski's crime did his fellow-countrymen, the Poles, an immense

Digitized by Google

deal of mischief. The iron grasp of their Russian rulers was tightened upon them from that time, and various merciful concessions which had been wrung from the Czar's pity for their nation were withdrawn. Probably it will transpire in time that the recent Nihilist outrages have had an equally pernicious effect in checking the Liberal progress of Russian institutions. The attempt of Solowiew in 1879, the explosion on the Moscow railway, and the attempted blowing up of the Winter Palace in the present year, are crimes of a sort which either drive an autocrat mad with panic or else harden him. In any case they cannot be favourable to the cause of the misguided factions who are responsible for them. Russia can, no more than any other state, civilise itself by murder.

A passing allusion has been made to the attempts of Nobiling and Hœdel on the Emperor of Germany; to that of Passanante on King Humbert; and to those of Moncasi and Ottero on the King of Spain. It will be remembered that in 1872 a cowardly endeavour was made to blow up the carriage that contained King Alphonso's predecessor, King Amadeo, and the latter's gentle queen, who was at the time in very weak health, and who died soon afterwards. Amadeo abdicated shortly after this occurrence, and left the unfortunate kingdom, which he had so honestly essayed to govern, to be ruled by the present sovereign, who, at the time of his accession, was a boy of eighteen. Alphonso, though young, has exhibited all the nerve and temper of middle age in facing the perils by which he is—and must continue for a long time to be—surrounded. He is quite conscious of standing in a most critical position; but he has faith in his star, and it must be hoped, for the credit of humanity, that he will be allowed to finish in peace and honour, and in the full ripeness of age, a reign which he began well, and which he is carrying on with courage.

One must add two Presidents of South American Republics to the list of rulers who have recently fallen victims to political zealotry. Don Gabriel Garcia Morenos, President of Ecuador, was assassinated in 1875; and Don B. Gill, President of Paraguay, perished in 1877 under similar circumstances. Of the attempts at assassination perpetrated in the Spanish Republics of America—in Mexico, Chili, Peru, and elsewhere—it would be invidious to speak. They are too numerous. The newspapers bring us accounts of new ones by almost every mail; and one can only marvel that any sensible man should be found to accept the presidential functions in these extraordinary countries, where a ruler seems to be looked upon as a living target at whom aspirant politicians are privileged to shoot without running the risk of being disgraced as murderers if they succeed in hitting him.

Digitized by Google

Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy."

Dr. Johnson is not generally supposed to have erred as a critic on the side of excessive approbation. And yet he managed to bestow upon one book the most forcible eulogium ever uttered. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* was, he said, the only book which ever took him out of bed two hours sooner than he intended. The compliment is always reproduced when Burton's book is mentioned. Second-hand booksellers judiciously quote it in their catalogues to stimulate the appetite of their customers. Every lover of books has been induced to prolong his evening sitting, sometimes to prolong it till daylight, by the charms of a fascinating author; but the most voracious of literary gluttons seldom breaks his morning slumbers under such an impulse. And when we add that it was Johnson who was thus beguiled, Johnson whose whole life was a continuous remorse for inability to rise early, when we see that Burton must have done for once what could be done neither by strong religious principles, nor by a morbidly keen conscience, nor by the pressure of stern necessity, and what the united energies of Boswell and the Thrales and the whole of the Club would have failed in securing, we must admit that the performance borders on the incredible. Doubtless it was the youthful Johnson whose slumbers he disturbed; and it was after the scanty fare of Lichfield, not the solid festivities of the "Mitre" or the "Turk's Head." With all deductions, we are still in presence of a "great fact." Many a young student must have turned with avidity to the promised treat, and a good many have probably retreated in disappointment. For, at first sight, the reader becomes aware of the curious mildness of another phrase of Johnson's; the book, he said, is "perhaps overloaded with quotations." That is rather like saying that Pickwick may "perhaps" be regarded as aiming at fun; that there is possibly a dash of humour in Charles Lamb; or that Pope may be accused of a tendency to satire. The *Anatomy* is all but made up of quotations; it is, as the author expressly says, a "cento collected from others;" a vast heterogeneous mass of miscellaneous reading; the contents of a commonplace book kept by a reader of boundless curiosity who has ranged over the whole field of learning then accessible, from the classical authors down through the fathers and the scholastic philosophers of the Middle Ages, to the grammarians, philosophers, physiologists and novelists of the Renaissance, and who has dipped into the most fashionable playbooks, poems, and essays of the day—Montaigne, Bacon, Spenser, Drayton, and even Ben Jonson and Shakspeare.* It is a

* Shakspeare is noticed at least twice; in a reference to Benedick and Beatrice in the Comedy, and a quotation from *Venus and Adonis*.

Digitized by Google

patchwork stuck together with scissors and paste, a queer amorphous mass, in spite of its ostensible plan, where we are half-baffled and half-attracted by references to strange authors who delighted in masquerading with Latin terminations to their names. We have heard more or less of some of them, of Bodinus and Paracelsus, or Cardan, or Erasmus; but who, we wonder, was Rlasis the Arabian, or Skenkius, or Poggius, or Fuchsius, or Busbequius*—a name which has no doubt a peculiar flavour of pleasant quaintness? Such names carry with them a faint association of the days of high-built and ponderous pedantry; we catch a passing glimpse of some ancient doctor damning another for his theory of the irregular verbs, or settling the theory of the enclitic δε, or conducting tremendous disputations in the schools with all the ponderous apparatus of the old syllogistic artillery. Yet it is possible to have too much of Busbequius; and, after dipping into the book, in search of that spirit and power which he is said (still by Johnson) to display when writing from his own mind, it is well if we do not give up the chase in despair, and decide that it is hardly worth cracking so vast a shell of effete pedantry to come at so small a kernel of sound sense.

It is well, I say; for after all there is a real charm in the old gentleman. Certainly the *Anatomy* is not a book to be read through; it would have no place in the short list of literary masterpieces which the intelligent reader is supposed to absorb into his mental structure. It is a book for odds and ends of time, and to be read only at appropriate seasons; not, perhaps, in a railway carriage or by the seaside, or in any place where the roaring wheels of our social machinery make themselves too plainly heard. It is rather a book to be taken up in a quiet library, by accident, not of malice prepense, and, in spite of Johnson, rather in the last hour of the night than at morning. When you are tired of blue-books or scientific wrangling or metaphysical hair-splitting; when you have turned to the last book from the circulating library only to discover that novel-writing is a forgotten art; that poetry has become a frivolous echo of sounding verbiage; that the smartest magazine article is a mere pert gabble of commonplace—jaundiced views which sometimes suggest themselves on such occasions—it may be pleasant to soothe yourself by entering this old museum of musty antiquities, and to feel as though you were entering a forgotten chamber where the skeletons of seventeenth-century spiders are still poised upon undisturbed cobwebs. The phantoms of Busbequius and his fellows may then have substantiality enough to hold converse with you for a time, and you gradually perceive that old Burton himself probably once filled an academical costume with

* Busbecq, or Busbequius, was in fact a distinguished diplomatist in the sixteenth century; he went to Constantinople and wrote travels, and, according to the *Biographie Universelle*, was the first to introduce the lilac from Turkey. There is a full article about him in Bayle. Possibly his name has a scholastic flavour to us from a vague association with the famous Dr. Busby.

Digitized by Google

a genuine structure of flesh and bone. Carefully as he retires behind his moth-eaten folios, there are moments when he drops his disguise, and you can depict the quaint smile of the humorous observer of men and manners, and believe that he had in his days a genuine share of the pathetic side of human folly. Nobody, it is true, is more provokingly shy. It is the shyness of the genuine old-fashioned scholar, who is half-ashamed of possessing tissues not made out of an ancient parchment. You ask him for an opinion, and he throws a dozen authorities at your head and effects his escape into an ingenious digression; he balances himself in curious equilibrium between the ranks of opposing doctors, and only lets slip at intervals an oblique intimation that he is inclined to think that one of them is a donkey. In all this he is certainly as different as possible from the ordinary humourist. He requires an interpreter, and must be cross-examined to make him yield up his real meaning; and yet, under all his concealments, he has a certain vein of shrewd humour which may at least serve to excite such a portion of that faculty as we may ourselves happen to possess.

Burton, in his opening address to the reader, sets forth his claims to the title of Democritus junior; and he tells at length the legend of the laughing philosopher; how the citizens of Abdera took him to be mad by reason of his excessive perception of the ludicrous, and brought the weeping Hippocrates to cure him of his folly; how Hippocrates found him sitting on the ground cutting up beasts to find out the causes of melancholy; and how, when Hippocrates tried to point out that reasonable citizens employed themselves upon business or pleasure instead of dissection, Democritus answered every argument by peals of laughter and demonstrations of the utter absurdity of all the ordinary activities of man. So clearly did Democritus preach upon the old text, Vanity of Vanities, that Hippocrates departed with the fullest conviction of his sanity. Burton proposes to continue the discourse of Democritus. Never, he says, was there so much food for laughter as now; for now, "as Salisburiensis says in his time, *totus mundus histrionem agit*, the whole world plays the fool; we have a new theatre, a new scene, a new comedy of errors, a new company of personate actors; *Volupiæ sacræ* (as Calcagnius willingly feigns in his *Apologius*) are celebrated all the world over, when all the actors were madmen or fools, and every hour changed habits, or took that which came next." The world is a farce; princes are mad; great men are mad; philosophers and scholars are mad, and so are those who scorn them. "Methinks," he says, "most men are fools," if we may apply the judicious tests given by Æneas Sylvius. "Nevisanus, the lawyer, holds it for an axiom, most women are fools; Seneca, men, be they old or young; who doubts it, youth is mad as Elius in Tully, *stulti adolescentuli;* old age little better, *deliri senes.*" And, after running through as many classes as he can think of, Burton confesses that he is himself as foolish and as mad as any one. We are tolerably familiar with the theory, "All the

Digitized by Google

world is a stage," and the players are "mostly fools." Satirists and poets and moralists and essayists have set the same sentiment to different times; and it is the special function of the humourist to give fresh edge to the ancient doctrine. Burton has certainly chosen a thesis which affords ample room for the widest illustration; and we have only to ask how he acquits himself of his task.

And here we perceive that he begins to shrink a little. Some people, he says, will think his performance "too fantastical, too light and comical for a divine;" and he replies that he is only speaking an assumed part, and collecting the opinions of others. "'Tis not I, but they that say it." You must blame Nevisanus and Calcagnius for the startling theory just expounded, not the Rev. Richard Burton, student of Christ Church, and Rector of Segrave. He trembles at his own audacity, and retires behind his mask. And, as he carries out this principle only too systematically, he is a humourist only by proxy. He does not let us see what he feels himself; he is not a mere buffoon, for we are not sure that he has no serious meaning; but he does not rise to be a daring humourist, for he is afraid ever to laugh out. We often fail to discover whether he is slily laughing in his sleeve or advancing some preposterous doctrine in honest reverence for the authority upon which it rests; whether his elaborate pedantry is really part of himself or a mere mask which he knows to be really grotesque. We follow Montaigne with the sense that we are talking to a man of vigorous intellect, who reads books as they ought to be read by a full-grown thinker; who treats them as an equal or a superior; and quotes them to illustrate his own thoughts, not as providing unalterable moulds to which his thoughts are bound to conform. But that is just the point which Burton leaves doubtful. Is he really half in fun when he quotes a dozen learned men to prove that disease or poverty may be a cause of melancholy; or is he distinctly aware that the learned men are indulging in ludicrous platitudes; or perhaps simply turning out his commonplace book to show his learning?

That is the curious problem which haunts us through the whole performance. The man was no doubt a puzzle to his contemporaries, as he remains for us. The view which they took of him is typified in the two or three anecdotes which do duty for his biography, doubtless more or less apocryphal, as such anecdotes invariably are, and yet perhaps as significant of the truth as the most authentic narratives. Burton, as Wood tells us, was very "facete, merry, and juvenile" amongst his college companions, and no man could surpass him (as we may easily believe) at interlarding his discourse with appropriate quotations, according to the fashion of the time. He meant, it is said, to cure himself of a tendency to melancholy by compiling the *Anatomy;* but melancholy increased his weakness so much that at last he could only relieve himself by listening to the ribaldry of the Oxford bargees, an amusement which "rarely failed to throw him into a violent fit of laughter." Burton, no doubt, had the true humourist's temperament; a disposition to melancholy

Digitized by Google

underlay his perception of the ludicrous, and this disposition might be fostered by a sedentary life and advancing years, till, tired of hunting for literary curiosities, he returned to the coarse brutalities of waterside buffoonery, as the sated epicure ends by finding the highest relish in simple beans and bacon. He died, we are told, at the exact time which he had foretold upon astrological grounds, and the students whispered that he had taken the necessary steps to secure the fulfilment of his own prediction. Certainly such a practical bull carried to a tragic conclusion, confirming the truth of astrology by a chance which really showed it to be false, and that at the cost of his own life, was a most fitting end for a thoroughgoing humourist. There would be a charm about setting such a trap for future dabblers in eccentric logical quibbles. In the *Anatomy*, Burton delivers his own views upon astrology with delightful ambiguity. If, he says, Sextus Empiricus, Picus Mirandula, Sextus ab Heminga, or others, have persuaded any man that the signs in the heavens have no more virtue than the signs over a shop or an inn, the sceptic may be referred to Bellantius, Pirovânus, Marascallerus, or Goclenius, who, let us hope, will give him satisfaction. Meanwhile, his own view is that the stars do not compel but incline, and incline so gently that a wise man may resist them. This charmingly elastic hypothesis is enough to allow your true humourist to reconcile his love of the marvellous with the occasional promptings of common sense. Burton, indeed, might have found authorities enough in his own day to make a genuine belief in astrology respectable. But downright belief was hardly in his way. The question for him was not the truth or falsehood of a doctrine, but the facility which it afforded for dallying with grotesque fancies. Living in the intellectual twilight, when the fantastic shapes of old superstition and mythical philosophy blended strangely with the growth of really scientific hypotheses, he could ramble at will through the stores of obsolete learning, picking up here and there whatever passage suited the fanciful faculty which had displaced his reason. To a genuine reasoner, or a man of independent common sense, there is a broad distinction between a proof and an illustration; between adducing evidence for a fact, and merely quoting some anecdote or phrase which expresses the opinion of a predecessor. He has beliefs of his own, and applies an independent test to other men's statements. But with Burton the distinction disappears, and we can therefore never quite settle whether he is a pedant in earnest or in sport, or in a mood strangely composed of the two.

In the eighteenth century Burton fell into the hands of one who, whatever his faults, must be reckoned amongst the very greatest of literary artists. No man had a more acute sense than Sterne of the possibilities of transmuting unpromising material into refined ore. He used Burton in a way which savours, to say the least, of plagiarism. We could at least have wished for some passing allusion to the poor old author whose stores he was using so freely. Had the thief acknowledged his debts in

Digitized by Google

the most cursory way, no one could have objected, even on moral grounds, to the admirable transformation of Burton into the elder Shandy. The extent of Sterne's obligations was revealed in Ferriar's *Illustrations*, but one case will be sufficient to exhibit the nature of the procedure. Burton, in one of his chapters (it is the fifth number of the third section of the second partition, being part of a "consolatory digression containing remedies to all discontents and passions of the mind"), goes through the good old series of reflections upon the death of friends. We know them all, alas! too well, and in new dresses they still do duty on occasions of administering "vacant chaff." "'Tis an inevitable chance," says Burton, "the first statute in Magna Charta, an everlasting Act of Parliament, all must die," and Sterne puts the phrase without alteration into Mr. Shandy's mouth. "Is it not much better not to hunger at all than to eat; not to thirst, than to drink to satisfy thirst; not to be cold, than to put on clothes to drive away cold?" asks Burton, translating from Lucian, and anticipating some modern pessimists; and Sterne appropriates not merely the venerable sophistry, but the words of his author. But the general style of Burton is most happily ridiculed, and the keynote of the sentiment struck in the opening passage:—

'Tis either Plato, or Plutarch, or Seneca, or Xenophon, or Epictetus, or Theophrastus, or Lucian, or some one, perhaps, of later date—either Cardan, or Budæus, or Petrarch, or Stella—or possibly it may be some divine or father of the Church, St. Austin, or St. Cyprian, or Bernard, who affirms that it is an irresistible and natural passion to weep for the loss of our friends or children—and Seneca (I'm positive) tells us somewhere that such griefs evacuate themselves best by that particular channel. And accordingly we find that David wept for his son Absalom, Adrian for his Antinous, Niobe for her children, and Apollodorus and Crito shed tears for Socrates before his death.

The passage gives virtually Sterne's criticism of Burton. It shows the point of view from which he had contemplated his victim, poring over the old folio, then a neglected curiosity, and chuckling to himself over curiosities so seldom disturbed as to permit him a sense of personal proprietorship. He just takes a characteristic passage from Burton, accentuates slightly the ludicrous side of his manner, and turns him out as an exquisite portrait of the ideal pedant. The art is inimitable, though possibly in the passage just quoted, Sterne is just a trifle too anxious to show that he is laughing with his reader, and so suggests the question whether Burton did not see the joke himself. My impression would be that, in spite of his elaborate mask of pedantry, Burton was at bottom quite conscious of the comic aspect of his preaching, and would have appreciated *Tristram Shandy* as well as any of its readers. After all, though the Oxford don of those days was nourished on great masses o obsolete scholasticism, there must have been sharp fellows enough in the common rooms, where Burton displayed his "merry and facete" wit, to understand the humour of serving up the tritest commonplaces with this portentous sauce of learned authority. When James was king, even

Digitized by Google

humour loved to masquerade in quaint scholastic forms, and wit to resolve itself into queer logical quibbling.

The whole scheme of the book strikes us, in fact, as a semi-humorous affectation of elaborate system. Burton professes to "anatomise this humour of melancholy," melancholy being a name used with most convenient vagueness. From one point of view it is the general sense for human folly; it includes those who are "metaphorically mad, who are stupid, angry, drunken, sulky, sottish, proud, vain-glorious, ridiculous, beastly, peevish, obstinate, extravagant, dry, doting, dull, desperate, hare-brained," and so forth. More properly, it seems, it is a disease so common "in this crazed age of ours, that scarce one in a thousand is free from it, and that splenetical, hypochondriacal wind especially, which proceeds from the spleen and short ribs." Every age, indeed, seems to have the same pride in claiming a monopoly of hypochondria as was instituted by the excellent Mrs. Pullet in her array of bottles. But also it seems that melancholy may have pretty much its modern significance, as in the charming verses which are supposed to have given a hint to Milton:—

When I go musing all alone,
Thinking of diverse things foreknown;
When I build castles in the air,
Void of sorrow and void of fear;
Pleasing myself with phantasms sweet,
Methinks the time runs very fleet.
All my joys to this are folly,
Nought so sweet as melancholy.

When I lay waking all alone,
Recounting what I have ill done;
My thoughts on me then tyrannise,
Fear and sorrow me surprise,
Whether I tarry still or go,
Methinks the time moves very slow.
All my griefs to this are jolly,
Nought so bad as melancholy.

Melancholy is here a name for the ambiguous mood in which we hold the lessons of sweet silent thought. But, again, we drop to the most physiological, and, as we should now call it, materialistic view. Melancholy is "black choler," as its name imports; and we are treated to the definitions of the whole series of physicians, the question having been agitated by Galen, Avicenna, Valesius, Montanus, Cappivaccius, Bright, Fiennes, and others, with a variety of results anything but encouraging to the patient. We cannot but sympathise with the excellent Trincavellius, who, being demanded what he thought of a certain melancholy young man, "ingenuously confessed that he was indeed melancholy, but he knew not to what kind to reduce it." Trincavellius, indeed, being consulted on another occasion along with Fallopius and Francan-

Digitized by Google

zanus, each of these three famous doctors gave a different opinion—an unprecedented and startling phenomenon!

Undaunted, however, by this want of agreement, or rather encouraged by the boundless field of conjecture which it opened, Burton constructs a vast and systematic scheme of analysis, a network so comprehensive, with its judicious divisions and subdivisions, partitions and members, and sections and subsections, that the fish must indeed be strange which cannot be somewhere entangled in his toils. The causes of melancholy range from the highest of all causes, down through magicians, witches, the stars, old age, sickness, poverty, sorrow, and affright, to special peculiarities of diet, such as the consumption of "dried, soused, indurate fish, as ling, fumados, red herring, sprats, stock-fish, haberdine, poorjohn, all shell-fish;" and even in detail we are generally left in a painful attitude of doubt. "Mesarius commends salmon, which Bruerimus contradicts," and who is to decide between Mesarius and Bruerimus? The physiology, indeed, which forms so large a part of the book is a very amusing illustration of the chaotic state of medical theory, which gave so many openings for the satirists of the period, and which has so happily been succeeded by perfect unanimity. Johnson was not improbably attracted to the *Anatomy* by the title, which promised to give him some hints in his life-long struggle with disease. If so, he must indeed have been edified. The general tone of the decisions of the physicians of the period is excellently given by the controversy as to hellebore. This drug fell out of its old repute, it appears, owing to the authority of Mesue and some other Arabians; and it is "still oppugned to this day by Crato and some junior physicians. Their reasons are briefly that Aristotle and Alexander Aphrodiseus called it a poison, whilst Constantine the Emperor, in his 'Graponics,' attributes no other virtue to it than to kill mice and rats, flies and mouldwarps." The most prominent argument, however, is that, according to Nicholas Leonicus, Solon, when "besieging I know not what city," poisoned the springs with hellebore, and so weakened the inhabitants that they could not bear arms. Recent writers, however, especially Paracelsus and Matthiolus, have restored the reputation of the injured drug. For so venerable and classical a medicine, it was perhaps natural to go back to the records of Solon's siege of "I know not what city." Indeed, another statement may remind us that, even in the reign of experimental philosophy, the effects of familiar drugs is not always established beyond possibility of dispute. "Tobacco," exclaims Burton, "divine, rare, and superexcellent tobacco, which goes far beyond all panaceas, potable gold and philosopher's stones, a sovereign remedy to all diseases. A good vomit, I confess, a virtuous herb, if it be well qualified, opportunely taken, and medicinally used; but, as it is commonly abused by most men, who take it as tinkers do ale, 'tis a plague, a mischief, a violent purger of goods, lands, health, hellish, devilish, and damned tobacco, the ruin and overthrow of body and soul." The controversy, as many contemporary allusions testify,

Digitized by Google

was as keen at that time as it is at the present day. Bobadil, we may remember, professed to have lived for twenty-one weeks on the fumes of this simple, whilst Justice Overdo entreats all men to avoid "the creeping venom of this subtle serpent."

Burton, to do him justice, does not fail to insinuate a sly hit or two at his physicians, under due shelter of learned names. "Common experience," he points out, shows that those "live freest from all manner of infirmities that make least use of apothecaries' physic;" though apothecaries might possibly argue that he is here inverting cause and effect. But he goes further: "The devil himself was the first inventor of medicine," he argues; "for Apollo invented it, and what was Apollo but the devil?" He points out with more cogent logic the discord of the doctors of his day, and remarks: "This art is wholly conjectural, if it be an art, uncertain, imperfect, and got by killing of men; they are a kind of butchers, leeches, menslayers, chirurgeons and apothecaries especially, that are indeed the physicians' hangmen and common executioners, though, to say truth, the physicians themselves come not far behind, for, according to that facete epigram of Maximilianus Urentius" (which, in Burton's phrase, I here voluntarily pretermit), "what's the difference?" And, though Burton's scepticism is judiciously tempered by a consideration which has restrained many of his fellow-satirists—namely, that when he is ill he will probably want a physician himself—he significantly prefaces his selections from the "infinite variety of medicines which he finds in every pharmacopœia" by the warning that they should be used "very moderately and advisedly," and only when diet will not answer the purpose. The scepticism, indeed, was never pushed to any excess. He was slightly scandalised, he tells us, when he saw his mother apply a spider in a nutshell wrapped in silk for the cure of a sufferer from ague; but, on finding the very same remedy prescribed by Dioscorides, Matthiolus, and Alderovandus, he began to "have a better opinion of it," and decides wisely with Renodæus that such amulets are "not altogether to be rejected."

Burton's collection of the prescriptions of the day is a curious illustration of the time in which the most virtuous and benevolent men went about bleeding fever-struck patients to death, flogging others out of madness, and with equal confidence administering spiders in nutshells—and all from the best possible motives. Yet it is perhaps the least amusing part of the matter forced into an elaborate framework, which, as I have said, is contrived with a view to including the most heterogeneous stores of learning. One could wish that he had not bothered himself with any ostensible method, and had avowedly presented himself as a mere rambler, diverging hither and thither in obedience to any accidental association. Southey's *Doctor*, the last book of any note which may be regarded as in some degree belonging to the same class, is so far more judiciously constructed, though Southey perhaps falls into the contrary error of forcibly contorting the natural flow of his thought into

Digitized by Google

an appearance of more arbitrary digressiveness than really belongs to him. A deliberate resolution to be funny and fanciful is perhaps more annoying than a forced appearance of methodical order. And there is certainly something characteristic in this thoroughgoing affectation which seems to be a part of the very nature of the old pedant. He cannot get rid of his academical costume even when he is disposed for a game of "high jinks." He discusses the philosophy of love-melancholy with all the airs of an anatomical demonstrator, and, if there is just a sly twinkle in his eye, he never permits himself such a smile as would be inconsistent with his views of professorial dignity. He proves with his usual array of imposing authorities that men often fall in love with beautiful women; and reminds us that "Achilles was moved in the midst of a battle by fair Briseis; Ajax by Tecmessa; Judith captivated that great captain Holofernes; Delilah, Samson; Rosamond, Henry the Second; Roxalana, Solyman the Magnificent, &c."; and we dimly wonder whether this comprehensive "&c." could even have included the excellent Burton himself. There is perhaps no class of men which is more apt to pride itself upon a knowledge of the world than the University don of modern times. A Fellow of a college resents the traditional estimate which would make of him a mere smoke-dried bachelor, ignorant, in virtue of his position, of the ordinary play of human passion. But old Burton accepts and prides himself upon his character of learned recluse. He has looked at the world, perhaps, more closely than he allows. He had been further from his common-room than merely to the bridge end to hear the ribaldry of the bargees. But he thinks it necessary to defend himself for discoursing upon love by more than his usual affectation of learned authority. "It is part of my treatise," he says roundly, "and I must and will perform my task," though in a spirit becoming a grave divine. And certainly no fair reader will complain that he has shown undue levity even in this department, where an access of gravity borders most closely upon the ludicrous.

To get a little closer to Burton himself, to catch a glimpse of the real man behind the elaborate mask, we naturally turn to the chapters in which his personal experience is forced to come nearer to the surface. "Democritus junior," the professional laugher at all human folly, might be expected to show his bitterness when he treats of his own craft. Beyond a doubt study is a cause of melancholy, and indeed, as Lavinius Lemmius assures us, the commonest of all causes. The theme should be a fruitful one, and, indeed, we find some touches of genuine feeling. It must be admitted, however, that Burton has a decidedly matter-of-fact and prosaic mode of regarding the subject. The most obvious reason, he tells us, of the melancholy of students is their ill-health. They alone, of all men, as Marsilius Ficinus observes, habitually neglect their tools. A painter washes his brushes, a smith looks to his anvil, a huntsman takes care of his hawks and hounds, and a musician of his lute; but a scholar never thinks of attending properly to his brains. Moreover, Saturn and

Digitized by Google

Mercury, the patrons of learning, are both of them dry planets, so that the brains of their subjects become withered, and the animal spirits, used up for contemplation, do not keep the other organs properly employed. Whence it follows that bald students are commonly troubled with "gouts, catarrhs, rheums, cachexia, bradiopepsia," and a long list of other diseases due to "overmuch sitting," exceeding even those which beset a famous lady at Diss in Norfolk. A modern writer of Burton's meditative turn would despise this physiological cause; he would call his "bradiopepsia" Welt-Schmerz, and elaborate a philosophical pessimism, proving conclusively that a man's disposition to melancholy must be proportioned to the depth of his knowledge of the general system of things. Burton, in his old-fashioned way, considers melancholy to be at bottom a disease, and frequently due to direct Satanic agency; and therefore, though he certainly considers that the Evil One plays a very conspicuous part in human affairs, he cannot properly pride himself upon his melancholy as a proof of intellectual and moral superiority. We must not complain of him for not anticipating a modern discovery.

He speaks, however, feelingly of the folly of intellectual labour. Do not scholars labour like Thebet Benchorat, who spent forty years in finding out the motion of the eighth sphere, till they become "dizzards," and are scoffed at by gallants for not knowing how to manage a hack, salute a gentlewoman, carve at table, and make cringes and congés, "as every common swasher can do?" The greatest scholars are generally fools in all worldly matters, such as Paglarensis, who thought that his farmer must be a cheat for reporting that his sow had eleven pigs and his mare only one foal. This test of the imbecility of scholars was one upon which Hazlitt has dwelt in some vigorous essays, and which has doubtless come home more or less to many an honest senior wrangler, who has discovered that his mathematics did not enable him to tie his neckcloth after the latest model. But the man who could seriously whine over such a distress would be showing a deficiency of self-respect only too much in Hazlitt's vein. If here and there, in this polished age, a scholar is a bit of a clown, it is generally from puerile conceit, and his incapacity for business means only that he has admirers enough ready to do his dirty work. Burton has a much more serious ground for lamentation. Scholars, he says, are generally enforced to "want, poverty, and beggary." He quotes a passage from Virgil (applied by Johnson to precisely the same purpose) enumerating the terrible forms which surround the gates of hell—grief, care, labour, fear, hunger, and poverty—and observes that they are the familiar attendants of the scholar. His best chance was to keep a school, or turn lecturer or curate, for which he might receive "falconer's wages," ten pounds a year and his food, so long as he pleased the parish or his parson; or he might become chaplain in a gentleman's family, marry an old housekeeper or chambermaid, and be settled in a small living—the natural aspiration of a poor clergyman for a century later, according to the satirists and pamphleteers. The scholar, again,

Digitized by Google

might get into a great man's family, and live, at the cost of gross flattery, as a worthless parasite; or, seeing the worthlessness of the higher learning, might take to one of the "bread studies"—and become a lawyer, to struggle against successful pettifoggers—or a physician, to find that in every village there were "so many mountebanks, empirics, quacksalvers, paracelsians," and others, that he could scarcely find a patient. The "grasping patrons," who plunder the Church for their own base purposes, are at the roots of the evil. It is useless to denounce them; they care not so long as they have money. "Dea Moneta, Queen Money," the almighty dollar, was even then, it seems, the "goddess we adore." We need not wonder then that patrons were a "base, profane, epicurean, hypocritical rout." "So cold is my charity, so defective in this behalf, that I shall never think better of them, than that they are rotten at core, their bones are full of epicurean hypocrisy and atheistical marrow, they are worse than heathens." And then Burton proceeds to lament over the contempt for learning characteristic of his time, and, of course, of his time alone. Gentlemen thought it unworthy of them: merchants might study arithmetic, spectacle-makers optics, and "landleapers" geography—a rich man had no need of such knowledge. In that base utilitarian age men only thought of practical advantages; in "former times"—a very comprehensive period—the highest were scholars themselves, and loved scholars. "Evax, that Arabian prince," was "a most expert jeweller and exquisite philosopher;" Alexander sent Xenophanes fifty talents, because he was poor; and "Archelaus, that Macedonian king, would not willingly sup without Euripides (amongst the rest, he drank to him at supper one night, and gave him a cup of gold for his pains)." Those days are gone; though we still have our Cæsar, commonly called James I., "our amulet, our sun, our sole comfort and refuge; . . . a famous scholar himself, and the sole patron, pillar, and sustainer of learning:" to which, in later editions, it had to be added that James had left a worthy successor. But, after making his reverence to the King's majesty, and to certain rather hypothetical exceptions to the general ignorance of the gentry, Burton returns to his lamentations. Our modern nobles are abandoned to field-sports, gaming, and drinking; they need nothing but some romance, playbook, or pamphlet, and know only a few scraps of French and Italian picked up in a foreign journey. And yet such must be the patrons! and those will thrive who please them best. "If the patron be precise, so must the clerk be; if he be papistical, his clerk must be so too, or be turned out. These"—parasites and time-servers, to wit—"are those clerks which serve the turn, whilst, in the meantime, we, that are University men, like so many hide-bound calves in a pasture, tarry out our time, wither away as a flower ungathered in a garden, and are never used; or as so many candles, illuminate ourselves alone, obscuring one another's light, and are not discerned here at all—the least of which, translated to a dark room, or to some country benefice where it might shine apart, would give a fair light, and be seen over all."

Digitized by Google

"We that are University men!" It is pleasant to notice the touch of college pride which breaks out in this little reference. The University indeed was not quite immaculate, but Burton judiciously veils his suggestions for its reform in learned language; it was not for one of the "candles" to develop any doubt as to the brilliancy of his associated luminaries. We have the good old don—the genuine believer in the universities as the sole sources of pure light in a feebly appreciative country—who used to flourish till very recent times, and has perhaps not been utterly abolished even by the profane intrusion of reforming commissioners. But it is more curious to remark how easy it would be to rewrite all this lamentation so as to make it an apparent echo of modern jeremiads. When, in speaking of political disorders, Burton illustrates his case by "those goodly provinces in Asia Minor which govern under the burden of a Turkish government; and those vast kingdoms of Muscovia, Russia, under a tyrannizing duke," we fancy that he might have been looking at an article in yesterday's paper; and the complaints to which we have just been listening, require little more alteration. We know how nervous disorders (we do not now call them melancholy) are specially characteristic of the present age; how many of them may be traced to the excessive stimulation of youthful intellects in the period of academical study; how all professions are filled to repletion, and how many years a young man has to wait before he can get a brief or a patient; how little the spirit of genuine research is encouraged, and how, in consequence, young men take to those studies which are likely to bring immediate results in the shape of pounds, shillings, and pence; how ill patronage is distributed, and what a number of excellent clergymen are forced to keep up an excellent appearance on totally inadequate stipends; how, if patrons are no longer so conspicuous in our democratic age, a man is still tempted to seek for preferment by flattering the ignorant prejudices of the many, and prostituting his talents to the base acts of popularity-hunting; and how "in former times" these evils never existed; how people really believed what they said; sold what they professed to sell; revered their rulers; and lived sound, healthy lives, free from hysteria, humbug, and money-worship. In every age the last new prophet of the doctrine of deterioration is convinced of the startling novelty and unimpeachable truth of his teaching. The explanation is probably the obvious one hinted by an old writer, who remarks that, as he grows older, he is constantly inclined to fancy that the world must be growing worse. If not, why should he be less cheerful?

In this chapter Burton speaks more from his own mind, and gives us a stronger dose of pessimism than is his wont. Yet even here he does not quite come up to the modern standard, or, indeed, to that of some of his contemporaries. The evils upon which he dwells are too specific and contingent. He hardly seems to regard the melancholy of the scholar as due to an imperfection in human nature itself, but rather as something which might conceivably be removed by a virtuous prince and a judicious

Digitized by Google

minister. He is thoroughly roused to anger by the baseness of patrons and the general misapplication of church property, but scarcely rises above the tone of a sturdy conservative of the common-room grumbling over the slowness of patronage and the growth of Puritanism. He does not rise to the sphere of thought in which the many political squabblings of the day appear as petty interludes in the vast drama of human history. The melancholy of the scholar does not suggest to him the lofty intellectual melancholy represented, for example, by Faust. Here and there, indeed, we have hints of the futility of all philosophy; celebrated authors have exploded school divinity, we are told, as a "vast ocean of obs and sols—a labyrinth of intricable questions, unprofitable contentions;" but he is scarcely sensible of that weariness of soul which comes over the profounder thinker, awed by the contemplation of the stupendous waste of the noblest human faculties, of the vast energy of intellect that has been dissipated in turning the everlasting metaphysical treadmill. He is more of a Wagner than a Faust. He does not tremble at the comparison between his narrow limits of human life and the illimitable series of problems to be solved, where each new answer only serves to suggest new and more perplexing questions; nor is he frightened by the many names of men greater and wiser than himself which are now mere labels to some exploded theory, nor disgusted with the empty verbiage presented to him by the most pretentious teachers for solid truth; nor tempted to become a charlatan himself in sheer bitterness of spirit, or to plunge into sensual pleasure as the only substantial good in losing himself in the stupendous labyrinths of sophistry and mutual contradiction misnamed philosophy. At a time when the keenest thinkers were bracing themselves for a fresh departure in inquiry, a man of powerful as well as learned mind might have given utterance to some such feeling in surveying the huge wilderness of bygone speculation. Placed between the dead and the living, a rising and an expiring school of thought, he might have meditated on the vanity of human wisdom, or have delighted, like Sir Thomas Browne, to reflect, amidst the jarring din of controversy, upon the mysterious depths in which all philosophy must so speedily lose itself.

But Burton was really an honest University don, who had rambled over many fields of learning, but had not really troubled himself to be profound and cynical. He rejoiced in "that famous library, renewed by Sir Thomas Bodley"—not because it suggested any reflections, inspiring or humiliating, as to the past history of the mind—but rather because it suggested a boundless potentiality of rambling amongst antiquarian curiosities. He was, according to his own account, a thorough-going gossip. He delighted to hear "new news every day," "rumours of plagues, fires, thefts, murders, inundations, massacres, meteors, comets, spectrums, prodigies, apparitions; of towns taken, cities besieged, in France, Germany, Turkey, Persia, Poland, &c.," as much as if he had lived at the present day, and gone to the Union to read his

Digitized by Google

Times and *Telegraph*. He heard of "plenty, pride, perplexities and cares, simplicity and villany; subtlety, knavery, candour, and integrity, mutually mixed and offering themselves;" whilst he rubbed on *privus privatus*—left to a solitary life and his own private discontents, and sometimes justified by the precedents of Diogenes and Democritus, walking abroad to make a few observations, sarcastic, humorous, petulant, or indignant. His literary curiosity was pretty much the counterpart of this kind of interest in the outside world. It was not that of a philosopher or poet, but of a man with insatiable appetite for every kind of printed matter, and with enough pungency of feeling to give an occasional flavour to his pages, and enable him to sustain fairly the character of Democritus junior, when he happened to remember it; but yet sufficient force to digest all his masses of knowledge, and saturate them with a dominant sentiment. He forgets that he is bound to be a satirist, and contents himself with tumbling out his stores of queer information without any pretence at illustrating any doctrines, melancholy or consolatory. Especially in those famous digressions concerning "the nature of devils" and "of air," he exhibits his curiosities with as grave a face as if he were displaying the most precious intellectual wares. The stories which he relates must have tickled his fancy, for some reason or other; but he leaves us to guess whether he is a believer or a sceptic, amused or awestruck, or idly curious. We hear how Cardan's father conjured up seven devils, on August 13, 1491, in Greek apparel, about forty years of age, some ruddy and some pale, who assured him that they lived about seven or eight hundred years; how, according to the schoolmen, there are nine kinds of bad spirits, the names of whose princes are given; though Gregorius Holsanus, who is followed by Marsilius Ficinus, makes only seven kinds, corresponding to the seven planets; the angels being placed above and the devils beneath the moon—an unlucky arrangement, one would say, for human beings! how the sublunary devils may be divided into six kinds, including water-nymphs, three of which appeared to Macbeth and Banquo, "two Scotch lords," and fairies which "are sometimes seen by old women and children;" whilst Paracelsus "reckons up many places in Germany where they do usually walk in little coats, some two feet long;" others, it seems, sat by the wayside to make men's horses stumble, rejoicing heartily if the rider swears; "with many such pretty feats."

He gives his notes upon geography with just as much gravity as his remarks upon the natural history of devils. "What greater pleasure can there be," he asks, "than to view these elaborate maps of Ortelius, Mercator, &c.?" He is curious about the variation of the compass, recently discovered by Gilbert, and wishes to find the source of the Nile, and to see "that great bird ruck which can carry an elephant," and the Arabian phœnix; he wants to know the depth of the atmosphere, and to determine whether the peak of Teneriffe is 50 miles high, as Patricius holds, or only 9, as Snellius demonstrates; he is curious

Digitized by Google

about the shells discovered on hill-tops, and the trees in bays, and also about the ship which was dug out of a mountain near Berne (in the year 1460), with 48 human bodies in it, from a mine fifty fathoms deep; and then he plunges into questions about the geography of the infernal regions, Ribeira holding that there is a "natural and local fire in the centre of the earth 200 Italian miles in diameter;" whilst Lessius thinks that the diameter can only be one Dutch mile, because he demonstrates that that space will hold 800,000,000,000 of damned bodies, "which will abundantly suffice." Then he returns to more accessible questions, and asks why places under the same latitude are not equally hot; why it rains stones, frogs, mice, and rats; what is the nature of meteors; what is the use of the moon; what is the true theory of the earth's motion, "now so much in question;" and whether the stars are inhabited. He seems to regard these last questions as insoluble, laughing at the presumption and hopeless discord of astronomers, and wonders that they are somehow mixed up with the eternal problem about the origin of evil. "But hoo!" exclaims the worthy Burton, "I am now gone quite out of sight. I am almost giddy with roaming about; I could have ranged further yet, but I am an infant and not able to dive into those profundities and sound those depths; not able to understand, much less to discuss. I leave the contemplation of these things to stronger wits, that have better ability and happier leisure to wade into such philosophical mysteries."

Wandering through this quaint museum we come here and there upon familiar anecdotes; upon an early form of smart sayings which have been given to the wits of successive generations; or queer illustrations of ancient forms of speculation. Reading Burton's anecdote of two palm-trees which languished till they grew high enough to see one another at a distance, we may remember the two trees in Heine's familiar poem; and on the next page we find the story from which Keats took his *Lamia;* and not far off is a remark which Coleridge turned into a well known epigram, pointing out that the devil, when he robbed Job of all his goods, judiciously omitted to take his wife. Just below is an anecdote which Thackeray has somewhere quoted about the amazement of the wild Irish when they saw the splendours of Henry the Second's court, and their foolish desire to become English forthwith; "who but English! but when they had now submitted themselves and lost their former liberty, they began to rebel some of them, others repent of what they had done, when it was too late." For one who delights in literary coincidences, in tracing the forms in which anecdotes present themselves in various ages, and observing how the old materials are being constantly refashioned to suit the taste of the present day, there is an ample hunting ground in Burton's curious miscellany; and we come to have a liking for the old gentleman even though we may admit that for the less curious reader it is better to take advantage of Sterne's spectacles and contemplate Burton as reflected in the elder Shandy.

Digitized by Google

Palingenesis.

I WAS fashioned long ago
In an element of snow,
And a white pair of cold wings
Bore me towards sublunar things;
Over Thought's immense dominions,
Floating on those chilly pinions,
Long I wandered faint and thin,
As a leaf the wind may spin,
And the tossing flashing sea
Moaned and whispered under me,
And the mountains of man's mind
Cast short shadows far behind,
And the rivers of the soul,
That still thunder as they roll,
At my cold height streamed and fled
Silent as a glacier-bed.
I was light and gay and bold,
Bathing in the sunset's gold,
Though my forehead's only flush
Came from the aurora's rush,
And my white wrists held on high
Showed no blue veins coursing by.
Through the world a dream I went,
Swathed in a frozen element,
Watching with a temperate breath
All the masque of birth and death,
Pleased to watch around, below,
The currents of emotion flow,
Pleased in my insane conceit
That I had no heart to beat.

Digitized by Google

But, one morning, as I flew
Higher in the vault of blue,
On a storm's eccentric curve
All my flight began to swerve.
Ah! my crystal limbs expire
In this new domain of fire!
Ah! my dædal wings must scorch
In this vast aërial torch,
And my fairy garments made
Of the frost's breath, all will fade!

Shrieking in a robe of pain,
Darkness fell upon my brain.
When I wakened, far away
In a still green dell I lay,
Shivering, naked; warm within,
What was this I heard begin
Throbbing, pulsing, like the sound
Of a hammer underground?
Then I caught a voice, repeating,
"'Tis thy new-born heart that's beating."

Since that day I have not flown
O'er the radiant world alone;
I am all content to follow
Love round this one mountain-hollow;
Weak I am, and flushed with feeling
Tender hopes across me stealing;
Tears between my eyelids creep,
And I waken still to weep;
Often as I walk along
I am agonised with song,
Thoughts of one belovèd form
Lash me like a sudden storm,
And for days I travel wholly
Muffled up in melancholy;
Yet for all this weary pain
I would not be calm again,

Digitized by Google

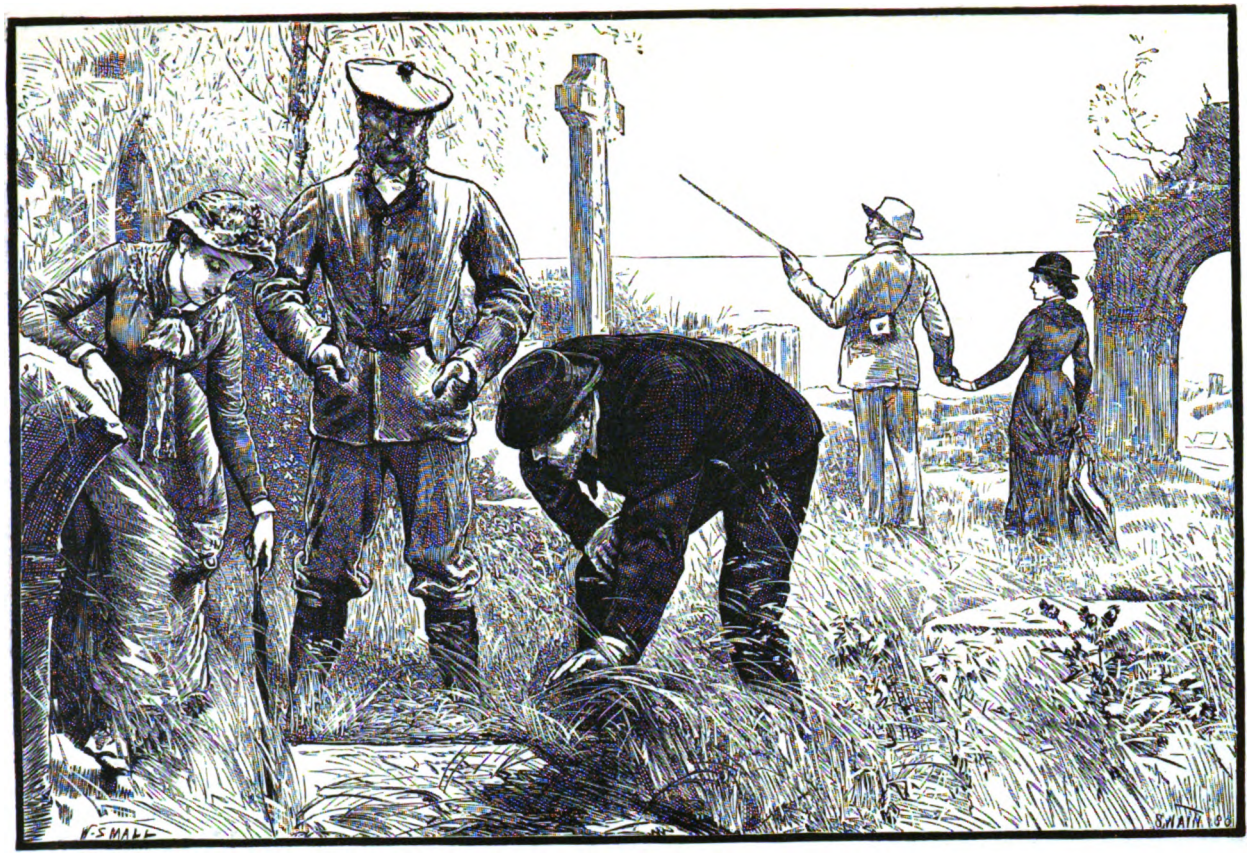
Yield the warmth and flush and riot
For my earlier crystal quiet,
Or this burning flesh resign
For those wings and robes of mine;
Having tasted Life and Breath
And the bitter Fear of Death,
Who could any more endure
That chill ether rare and pure?
Having known the ache of loving,
And the warm veins' stir and moving,
And the yearning hopes that start,
Who could live without a heart?

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

Digitized by Google

"Well, Fred," says our facetious Laird, "have ye hung up all the game that Mr. Smith brought back from the moor yesterday?" and Master

Digitized by Google



HERE AND THERE WE TRIED TO BRUSH THE WEEDS AWAY.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Fred was so much tickled by this profound joke that he had to go down into the forecastle to hide his grinning delight, and went covertly smiling about his work for the next quarter of an hour.

Then the hubbub gradually ceased; for the boats had been swung to the davits, and the *White Dove* was gently slipping away from her moorings. A fine northerly breeze; a ruffled blue sea; and the South all shining before her! How should we care whither the beautiful bird bore us? Perhaps before the night fell we should be listening for the singing of the mermaid of Colonsay.

The wooded shores slowly drew away; the horizon widened; there was no still blue, but a fine windy grey, on the vast plain of the sea that was opening out before us.

"Oh, yes, mem!" says John of Skye to Miss Avon. "I wass sure we would get a good breeze for Mr. Sutherland when he will come back to the yat."

Miss Avon does not answer: she is looking at the wide sea, and at the far islands, with somewhat wistful eyes.

"Would you like to tek the tiller now, mem?" says the bearded skipper, in his most courteous tones. "Mr. Sutherland was aye very proud to see ye at the tiller."

"No, thank you, John," she says.

And then she becomes aware that she has—in her absent mood—spoken somewhat curtly; so she turns and comes over to him, and says in a confidential way—

"To tell you the truth, John, I never feel very safe in steering when the yacht is going before the wind. When she is close-hauled I have something to guide me; but with the wind coming behind I know I may make a blunder without knowing why."

"No, no, mem; you must not let Mr. Sutherland hear you say that: when he was so prood o' learnin' ye; and there is no dancher at ahl of your making a plunder."

But at this moment our young Doctor himself comes on deck; and she quickly moves away to her camp-stool, and plunges herself into a book; while the attentive Mr. Smith provides her with a sunshade and a footstool. Dr. Sutherland cannot, of course, interfere with her diligent studies.

Meanwhile our hostess is below, putting a few finishing touches to the decoration of the saloon; while the Laird, in the blue-cushioned recess at the head of the table, is poring over *Municipal London*. At length he raises his eyes, and says to his sole companion—

"I told ye, ma'am, he was a good lad—a biddable lad—did I not?"

"You are speaking of your nephew, of course," she says. "Well; it is very kind of him to offer to turn out of his state-room in favour of Dr. Sutherland; but there is really no need for it. Angus is much better accustomed to roughing it on board a yacht."

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," says the Laird, with judicial gravity.

Digitized by Google

"Howard is in the right there too. He must insist on it. Dr. Sutherland is your oldest friend. Howard is here on a kind of sufferance. I am sure we are both of us greatly obliged to ye."

Here there was the usual deprecation.

"And I will say," observes the Laird, with the same profound air, "that his conduct since I sent for him has entirely my approval—entirely my approval. Ye know what I mean. I would not say a word to him for the world—no, no—after the first intimation of my wishes, no coercion. Every one for himself: no coercion."

She does not seem so overjoyed as might have been expected.

"Oh, of course not!" she says. "It is only in plays and books that anybody is forced into a marriage; at least you don't often find a man driven to marry anybody against his will. And indeed, sir," she adds, with a faint smile, "you rather frightened your nephew at first. He thought you were going to play the part of a stage guardian, and disinherit him if he did not marry the young lady. But I took the liberty of saying to him that you could not possibly be so unreasonable. Because, you know, if Mary refused to marry him, how could that be any fault of his?"

"Precisely so," said the Laird, in his grand manner. "A most judeecious and sensible remark. Let him do his part, and I am satisfied. I would not exact impossibeelities from any one, much less from one that I have a particular regard for. And, as I was saying, Howard is a good lad."

The Laird adopted a lighter tone.

"Have ye observed, ma'am, that things are not at all unlikely to turn out as we wished?" he said, in a half-whisper; and there was a secret triumph in his look. "Have ye observed? Oh, yes! young folks are very shy; but their elders are not blind. Did ye ever see two young people that seemed to get on better together on so short an acquaintance?"

"Oh, yes!" she says, rather gloomily; "they seem to be very good friends."

"Yachting is a famous thing for making people acquainted," says the Laird, with increasing delight. "They know one another now as well as though they had been friends for years on the land. Has that struck ye now before?"

"Oh, yes!" she says. There is no delight on *her* face.

"It will jist be the happiness of my old age, if the Lord spares me, to see these two established at Denny-mains," says he, as if he were looking at the picture before his very eyes. "And we have a fine soft air in the west of Scotland; it's no like asking a young English leddy to live in the bleaker parts of the north, or among the east winds of Edinburgh. And I would not have the children sent to any public school, to learn vulgar ways of speech and clipping of words. No, no; I would wale out a young man from our Glasgow University—one familiar with the

Digitized by Google

proper tradestions of the English language; and he will guard against the clipping fashion of the South, just as against the yaumering of the Edinburgh bodies. Ah will wale him out maself. But no too much education: no, no; that is the worst gift ye can bestow upon bairns. A sound constitution; that is first and foremost. I would rather see a lad out and about shooting rabbits than shut up wi' a pale face among a lot of books. And the boys will have their play, I can assure ye; I will send that fellow Andrew about his business if he doesna stop netting and snaring. What do I care about the snipping at the shrubs? I will put out turnips on the verra lawn, jist to see the rabbits run about in the morning. The boys shall have their play at Denny-mains, I can assure ye; more play than school-hours, or I'm mistaken!"

The Laird laughed to himself just as if he had been telling a good one about Homesh.

"And no muzzle-loaders," he continued, with a sudden seriousness. "Not a muzzle-loader will I have put into their hands. Many's the time it makes me grue to think of my loading a muzzle-loader when I was a boy—loading one barrel, with the other barrel on full-cock, and jist gaping to blow my fingers off. I'm thinking Miss Mary—though she'll no be Miss Mary then—will be sore put to when the boys bring in thrushes and blackbirds they have shot; for she's a sensitive bit thing; but what I say is, better let them shoot thrushes and blackbirds than bring them up to have white faces ower books. Ah tell ye this: I'll give them a sovereign a-piece for every blackbird they shoot on the wing!"

The Laird had got quite excited; he did not notice that *Municipal London* was dangerously near the edge of the table.

"Andrew will not objeck to the shooting o' blackbirds," he said, with a loud laugh—as if there were something of Homesh's vein in that gardener. "The poor crayture is just daft about his cherries. That's another thing; no interference with bairns in a garden. Let them steal what they like. Green apples? bless ye, they're the life o' children! Nature puts everything to rights. She kens better than books. If I catched the schoolmaster lockin' up they boys in their play-hours, my word but I'd send him fleein'!"

He was most indignant with this schoolmaster, although he was to be of his own 'waling.' He was determined that the lads should have their play, lessons or no lessons. Green apples he preferred to Greek. The dominie would have to look out.

"Do you think, ma'am," he says, in an insidious manner; "do ye think she would like to have a furnished house in London for pairt of the year? She might have her friends to see——"

Now at last this is too much. The gentle, small creature has been listening with a fine, proud, hurt air on her face, and with tears near to her eyes. Is it thus that her Scotch student, of whom she is the fierce champion, is to be thrust aside?

"Why," she says, with an indignant warmth; "you take it all for

Digitized by Google

granted! I thought it was a joke. Do you really think your nephew is going to marry Mary? And Angus Sutherland in love with her!"

"God bless me!" exclaimed the Laird, with such a start that the bulky *Municipal London* banged down on the cabin floor.

Was it the picking up of that huge tome, or the consciousness that he had been betrayed into an unusual ejaculation, that crimsoned the Laird's face? When he sate upright again, however, wonder was the chief expression visible in his eyes.

"Of course I have no right to say so," she instantly and hurriedly adds; "it is only a guess—a suspicion. But haven't you seen it? And until quite recently I had other suspicions, too. Why, what do you think would induce a man in Angus Sutherland's position to spend such a long time in idleness?"

But by this time the Laird had recovered his equanimity. He was not to be disturbed by any bogie. He smiled serenely.

"We will see, ma'am; we will see. If it is so with the young man, it is a peety. But you must admit yourself that ye see how things are likely to turn out?"

"I don't know," she said, with reluctance: she would not admit that she had been grievously troubled during the past few days.

"Very well, ma'am, very well," said the Laird, blithely. "We will see who is right. I am not a gambler, but I would wager ye a gold ring, a sixpence, and a silver thimble that I am no so far out. I have my eyes open; oh, aye! Now I am going on deck to see where we are."

And so the Laird rose, and put the bulky volume by, and passed along the saloon to the companion. We heard

Sing tàntara! Sing tàntara!

as his head appeared. He was in a gay humour.

Meanwhile the *White Dove*, with all sail set, had come along at a spanking pace. The weather threatened change, it is true; there was a deep gloom overhead; but along the southern horizon there was a blaze of yellow light which had the odd appearance of being a sunset in the middle of the day; and in this glare lay the long blue promontory known as the Rhinns of Islay, within sight of the Irish coast. And so we went down by Easdail, and past Colipoll and its slate-quarries; and we knew this constant breeze would drive us through the swirls of the Doruis Mohr—the "Great Gate." And were we listening, as we drew near in the afternoon to the rose-purple bulk of Scarba, for the low roar of Corrievrechan? We knew the old refrain:—

As you pass through Jura's Sound
Bend your course by Scarba's shore;
Shun, oh, shun the gulf profound
Where Corrievrechan's surges roar!

But now there is no ominous murmur along those distant shores. Silence and a sombre gloom hang over the two islands. We are glad to

Digitized by Google

shun this desolate coast; and glad that the *White Dove* is carrying us away to the pleasanter south, when, behold! behold! another sight! As we open out the dreaded gulf, Corrievrechan itself becomes but an open lane leading out to the west; and there, beyond the gloom, amid the golden seas, lies afar the music-haunted Colonsay! It is the calm of the afternoon; the seas lie golden around the rocks; surely the sailors can hear her singing now for the lover she lost so long ago! What is it that thrills the brain so, and fills the eyes with tears, when we can hear no sound at all coming over the sea?

It is the Laird who summons us back to actualities.

"It would be a strange thing," says he, "if Tom Galbraith were in that island at this very meenit. Ah'm sure he was going there."

And Captain John helps.

"I not like to go near Corrievrechan," he says, with a grin, "when there is a flood tide and half a gale from the sou'-west. It is an ahfu' place," he adds, more seriously, "an ahfu' place."

"I should like to go through," Angus Sutherland says, quite inadvertently.

"Aye, would ye, sir?" says Captain John, eagerly. "If there wass only you and me on board, I would tek you through ferry well—with the wind from the norrard and an ebb tide. Oh, yes! I would do that; and maybe we will do it this year yet!"

"I do not think I am likely to see Corrievrechan again this year," said he, quite quietly—so quietly that scarcely any one heard. But Mary Avon heard.

Well, we managed, after all, to bore through the glassy swirls of the Doruis Mohr—the outlying pickets, as it were, of the fiercer whirlpools and currents of Corrievrechan—and the light breeze still continuing we crept along in the evening past Crinan, and along the lonely coast of Knapdale, with the giant Paps of Jura darkening in the west. Night fell; the breeze almost died away; we turned the bow of the *White Dove* towards an opening in the land, and the flood tide gently bore her into the wide, silent, empty loch. There did not seem to be any light on the shores. Like a tall, grey phantom the yacht glided through the gloom; we were somewhat silent on deck.

But there was a radiant yellow glow coming through the skylight; and Master Fred had done his best to make the saloon cheerful enough. And where there is supper there ought to be other old-fashioned institutions—singing, for example; and how long was it since we had heard anything about the Queen's Maries, or "Ho, ro, clansmen!" or the Irish Brigade? Nobody, however, appeared to think of these things. This was a silent and lonely loch, and the gloom of night was over land and water; but we still seemed to have before our eyes the far island amid the golden seas. And was there not still lingering in the night air some faint echo of the song of Colonsay? It is a heart-breaking song; it is all about the parting of lovers.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXX.

A Sunday in far Solitudes.

Mary Avon is seated all alone on deck, looking rather wistfully around her at this solitary Loch-na-Chill—that is, the Loch of the Burying Place. It is Sunday morning, and there is a more than Sabbath peace dwelling over sea and shore. Not a ripple on the glassy sea; a pale haze of sunshine on the islands in the south; a stillness as of death along the low-lying coast. A seal rises to the surface of the calm sea, and regards her for a moment with his soft black eyes; then slowly subsides. She has not seen him; she is looking far away.

Then a soft step is heard on the companion; and the manner of the girl instantly changes. Are these tears that she hastily brushes aside? But her face is all smiles to welcome her friend. She declares that she is charmed with the still beauty of this remote and solitary loch.

Then other figures appear; and at last we are all summoned on deck for morning service. It is not an elaborate ceremony; there are no candles, or genuflexions, or embroidered altar-cloths. But the Laird has put on a black frock coat, and the men have put aside their scarlet cowls and wear smart sailor-looking cloth caps. Then the Laird gravely rises, and opens his book.

Sometimes, it is true, our good friend has almost driven us to take notice of his accent, and we have had our little jokes on board about it; but you do not pay much heed to these peculiarities when the strong and resonant voice—amid the strange silence of this Loch of the Burying Place—reads out the 103rd Psalm: "Like as a father peetieth his children," he may say; but one does not heed that. And who is to notice that, as he comes to these words, he lifts his eyes from the book and fixes them for a moment on Mary Avon's downcast face? "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children." Then, when he had finished the Psalm, he turned to the New Testament, and read in the same slow and reverent manner the 6th chapter of Matthew. This concluded the service; it was not an elaborate one.

Then, about an hour afterwards, the Laird, on being appealed to by his hostess, gave it as his opinion that there would be no Sabbath desecration at all in our going ashore to examine the ruins of what appeared to be an ancient chapel, which we could make out by the aid of our glasses on the green slope above the rocks. And as our young friends—Angus and the Youth—idly paddled us away from the yacht, the Laird

Digitized by Google

began to apologise to his hostess for not having lengthened the service by the exposition of some chosen text.

"Ye see, ma'am," he observed, "some are gifted in that way, and some not. My father, now, had an amazing power of expounding and explaining—I am sure there was nothing in *Hutcheson's Exposeetion* he had not in his memory. A very famous man he was in those days as an Anti-Lifter—very famous; there were few who could argue with him on that memorable point."

"But what did you call him, sir?" asks his hostess, with some vague notion that the Laird's father had lived in the days of body-snatchers.

"An Anti-Lifter: it was a famous controversy; but ye are too young to remember of it perhaps. And now in these days we are more tolerant, and rightly so; I do not care whether the minister lifts the sacramental bread before distribution or not, now that there is no chance of Popery getting into our Presbyterian Church in disguise. It is the speerit, not the form, that is of importance: our Church authoritatively declares that the efficacy of the sacraments depends not 'upon any virtue in them or in him that doth administer them.' Aye; that is the cardinal truth. But in those days they considered it right to guard against Popery in every manner; and my father was a prominent Anti-Lifter; and well would he argue and expound on that and most other doctrinal subjects. But I have not much gift that way," added the Laird, modestly; quite forgetting with what clearness he had put before us the chief features of the great Semple case.

"I don't think you have anything to regret, sir," said our young Doctor, as he carelessly worked the oar with one hand, "that you did not bother the brains of John and his men with any exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. Isn't it an odd thing that the common fishermen and boatmen of the Sea of Galilee understood the message Christ brought them just at once? and now-a-days, when we have millions of churches built, and millions of money being spent, and tons upon tons of sermons being written every year, we seem only to get further and further into confusion and chaos. Fancy the great army of able-bodied men that go on expounding and expounding; and the learning and time and trouble they bestow on their work; and scarcely any two of them agreed; while the people who listen to them are all in a fog. Simon Peter, and Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee, must have been men of the most extraordinary intellect. They understood at once; they were commissioned to teach; and they had not even a Shorter Catechism to go by."

The Laird looked at him doubtfully. He did not know whether to recognise in him a true ally or not. However, the mention of the Shorter Catechism seemed to suggest solid ground; and he was just about entering into the question of the Subordinate Standards when an exclamation of rage on the part of his nephew startled us. That handsome lad, during all this theological discussion, had been keeping a watchful and matter-of-fact eye on a number of birds on the shore; and

Digitized by Google

now that we were quite close to the sandy promontory, he had recognised them.

"Look! look!" he said, in tones of mingled eagerness and disappointment. "Golden plovers, every one of them! Isn't it too bad? It's always like this on Sunday. I will bet you won't get within half a mile of them to-morrow!"

And he refused to be consoled as we landed on the sandy shore; and found the golden-dusted, long-legged birds running along before us, or flitting from patch to patch of the moist greensward. We had to leave him behind in moody contemplation as we left the shore and scrambled up the rugged and rocky slope to the ruins of this solitary little chapel.

There was an air of repose and silence about these crumbling walls and rusted gates that was in consonance with a habitation of the dead. And first of all, outside, we came upon an upright Iona cross, elaborately carved with strange figures of men and beasts. But inside the small building, lying prostrate among the grass and weeds, there was a collection of those memorials that would have made an antiquarian's heart leap for joy. It is to be feared that our guesses about the meaning of the emblems on the tombstones were of a crude and superficial character. Were these Irish chiefs, those stone figures with the long sword and the harp beside them? Was the recurrent shamrock a national or religious emblem? And why was the effigy of this ancient worthy accompanied by a pair of pincers, an object that looked liked a tooth-comb, and a winged griffin? Again, outside, but still within the sacred walls, we came upon still further tombs of warriors, most of them hidden among the long grass; and here and there we tried to brush the weeds away. It was no bad occupation for a Sunday morning, in this still and lonely burial-place above the wide seas.

On going on board again we learned from John of Skye that there were many traces of an ancient ecclesiastical colonisation about this coast; and that in especial there were a ruined chapel and other remains on one of a small group of islands that we could see on the southern horizon. Accordingly, after luncheon, we fitted out an expedition to explore that distant island. The Youth was particularly anxious to examine these ecclesiastical remains; he did not explain to everybody that he had received from Captain John a hint that the shores of this sainted island swarmed with seals.

And now the gig is shoved off; the four oars strike the glassy water; and away we go in search of the summer isles in the south. The Laird settles himself comfortably in the stern; it seems but natural that he should take Mary Avon's hand in his, just as if she were a little child.

"And ye must know, Miss Mary," he says, quite cheerfully, "that if ever ye should come to live in Scotland, ye will not be persecuted with our theology. No, no; far from it; we respect every one's religion, if it is sincere; though we cling to our own. And why should we not

Digitized by Google

cling to it, and guard it from error? We have had to fight for our civil and religious leeberties inch by inch, foot by foot; and we have won. The blood of the saints has not been shed in vain. The cry of the dying and wounded on many a Lanarkshire moor—when the cavalry were riding about, and hewing and slaughtering—was not wasted on the air! The Lord heard, and answered. And we do well to guard what we have gained; and, if need were, there are plenty of Scotsmen alive at this day who would freely spend their lives in defending their own releegion. But ye need not fear. These are the days of great toleration. Ye might live in Scotland all your life, and not hear an ill word said of the Episcopal Church!"

After having given this solemn assurance, the Laird cast a glance of sly humour at Angus Sutherland.

"I will confess," said he, "when Dr. Sutherland brought that up this morning about Peter and Andrew, and James and John, I was a bit put out. But then," he added, triumphantly, "ye must remember that in those days they had not the inseedious attacks of Prelacy to guard against. There was no need for them to erect bulwarks of the faith. But in our time it is different, or rather it has been different. I am glad to think that we of the Scotch Church are emancipated from the fear of Rome; and I am of opeenion that with the advancing times they are in the right who advocate a little moderation in the way of applying and exacting the Standards. No, no; I am not for bigotry. I assure ye, Miss Mary, ye will find far fewer bigots in Scotland than people say."

"I have not met any, sir," remarks Miss Mary.

"I tell ye what," said he, solemnly; "I am told on good authority that there is a movement among the U. P. Presbytery to send up to the Synod a sort of memorial with regard to the Subordinate Standards—that is, ye know, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms—just hinting, in a mild sort of way, that these are of human composition, and necessarily imperfect; and that a little amount of—of——"

The Laird could not bring himself to pronounce the word "laxity." He stammered and hesitated, and at last said—

"Well; a little judeecious liberality of construction—do ye see?—on certain points is admissible, while clearly defining other points on which the Church will not admit of question. However, as I was saying, we have little fear of Popery in the Presbyterian Church now; and ye would have no need to fear it in your English Church if the English people were not so sorely wanting in humour. If they had any sense of fun they would have laughed those millinery, play-acting people out o' their Church long ago——"

But at this moment it suddenly strikes the Laird that a fair proportion of the people he is addressing are of the despised English race; and he hastily puts in a disclaimer.

Digitized by Google

"I meant the clergy, of course," says he, most unblushingly, "the English clergy, as having no sense of humour at all—none at all. Dear me, what a stupid man I met at Dunoon last year! There were some people on board the steamer talking about Homesh—ye know, he was known to every man who travelled up and down the Clyde—and they told the English clergyman about Homesh wishing he was a stot. 'Wishing he was a what?' says he. Would ye believe it, it took about ten meenutes to explain the story to him bit by bit; and at the end of it his face was as blank as a bannock before it is put on the girdle!"

We could see the laughter brimming in the Laird's eyes; he was thinking either of the stot or some other story about Homesh. But his reverence for Sunday prevailed. He fell back on the Standards; and was most anxious to assure Miss Avon that, if ever she were to live in Scotland, she would suffer no persecution at all, even though she still determined to belong to the Episcopal Church.

"We have none in the neighbourhood of Strathgovan," he remarked, quite simply; "but ye could easily drive in to Glasgow"—and he did not notice the quick look of surprise and inquiry that Angus Sutherland immediately directed from the one to the other. But Mary Avon was looking down.

It was a long pull; but by-and-by the features of the distant island became clearer; and we made out an indentation that probably meant a creek of some sort. But what was our surprise, as we drew nearer and nearer to what we supposed to be an uninhabited island, to find the topmast of a vessel appearing over some rocks that guard the entrance to the bay? As we pulled into the still waters, and passed the heavy black smack lying at anchor, perhaps the two solitary creatures in charge of her were no less surprised at the appearance of strangers in these lonely waters. They came ashore just as we landed. They explained, in more or less imperfect English, that they were lobster-fishers; and that this was a convenient haven for their smack, while they pulled in their small boat round the shores to look after the traps. And if—when the Laird was not looking—his hostess privately negotiated for the sale of half-a-dozen live lobsters, and if young Smith also took a quiet opportunity of inquiring about the favourite resorts of the seals; what then? Mice will play when they get the chance. The Laird was walking on with Mary Avon; and was telling her about the Culdees.

And all the time we wandered about the deserted island, and explored its ruins, and went round its bays, the girl kept almost exclusively with the Laird, or with her other and gentle friend; and Angus had but little chance of talking to her or walking with her. He was left pretty much alone. Perhaps he was not greatly interested in the ecclesiastical remains. But he elicited from the two lobster-fishers that the hay scattered on the floor of the chapel was put there by fishermen, who used the place to sleep in when they came to the island. And they showed him the curious tombstone of the saint, with its sculptured ele-

Digitized by Google

phant and man on horseback. Then he went away by himself to trace out the remains of a former civilisation on the island; the withered stumps of a blackthorn hedge, and the abundant nettle. A big rat ran out; the only visible tenant of the crumbled habitation.

Meanwhile the others had climbed to the summit of the central hill; and behold! all around the smooth bays were black and shining objects, like the bladders used on fishermen's nets. But these moved this way and that; sometimes there was a big splash as one disappeared. The Youth sate and regarded this splendid hunting-ground with a breathless interest.

"I'm thinking ye ought to get your seal-skin to-morrow, Miss Mary," says the Laird, for once descending to worldly things.

"Oh, I hope no one will be shot for me!" she said. "They are such gentle creatures."

"But young men will be young men, ye know," said he, cheerfully. "When I was Howard's age, and knew I had a gun within reach, a sight like that would have made my heart jump."

"Yes," said the nephew; "but you never do have a sight like that when you have a rifle within reach."

"Wait till to-morrow—wait till to-morrow," said the Laird, cheerfully. "And now we will go down to the boat. It is a long pull back to the yacht."

But the Laird's nephew got even more savage as we rowed back in the calm, pale twilight. Those wild duck would go whirring by within easy shot—apparently making away to the solitudes of Loch Swen. Then that greyish-yellow thing on the rocks—could it be a sheep? We watched it for several minutes, as the gig went by in the dusk; then, with a heavy plunge or two, the seal floundered down and into the water. The splash echoed through the silence.

"Did you ever see the like of that?" the Youth exclaimed, mortified beyond endurance. "Did you ever? As big as a cow! And as sure as you get such a chance, it is Sunday!"

"I am very glad," says Miss Avon. "I hope no one will shoot a seal on my account."

"The seal ought to be proud to have such a fate," said the Laird, gallantly. "Ye are saving him from a miserable and lingering death of cold, or hunger, or old age. And whereas in that case nobody would care anything or see anything more about him, ye give him a sort of immortality in your dining-room, and ye are never done admiring him. A proud fellow he ought to be. And if the seals about here are no very fine in their skins, still it would be a curiosity, and at present we have not one at all at Denny-mains."

Again this reference to Denny-mains: Angus Sutherland glanced from one to the other; but what could he see in the dusk?

Then we got back to the yacht: what a huge grey ghost she looked in the gloom! And as we were all waiting to get down the

Digitized by Google

companion, Angus Sutherland put his hand on his hostess's arm, and stayed her.

"You must be wrong," said he, simply. "I have offended her somehow. She has not spoken ten words to me to-day."

CHAPTER XXXI.

Hidden Springs.

"Well, perhaps it is better, after all," says a certain person, during one of those opportunities for brief conjugal confidences that are somewhat rare on board ship. She sighs as she speaks. "I thought it was going to be otherwise. But it will be all the better for Angus not to marry for some years to come. He has a great future before him; and a wife would really be an encumbrance. Young professional men should never marry; their circumstances keep on improving, but they can't improve their wives."

All this is very clear and sensible. It is not always that this person talks in so matter-of-fact a way. If, however, everything has turned out for the best, why this sudden asperity with which she adds—

"But I did not expect it of Mary."

And then again—

"She might at least be civil to him."

"She is not uncivil to him. She only avoids him."

"I consider that her open preference for Howard Smith is just a little bit too ostentatious," she says, in rather an injured way. "Indeed, if it comes to that, she would appear to prefer the Laird to either of them. Any stranger would think she wanted to marry Denny-mains himself."

"Has it ever occurred to you," is the respectful question, "that a young woman—say once in a century—may be in that state of mind in which she would prefer not to marry anybody?"

Abashed? Not a bit of it! There is a calm air of superiority on her face: she is above trifles and taunts.

"If unmarried women had any sense," she says, "that would be their normal state of mind."

And she might have gone on enlarging on this text, only that at this moment Mary Avon comes along from the ladies' cabin; and the morning greetings take place between the two women. Is it only a suspicion that there is a touch of coldness in the elder woman's manner? Is it possible that her love for Mary Avon may be decreasing by ever so little a bit?

Then Angus comes down the companion: he has got some wild flowers; he has been ashore. And surely he ought to give them to the younger of the two women: she is of the age when such pretty compli-

Digitized by Google

ments are a natural thing. But no. The flowers are for his hostess—for the decoration of her table; and Mary Avon does not look up as they are handed along.

Then young Mr. Smith makes his appearance; he has been ashore too. And his complaints and protests fill the air.

"Didn't I tell you?" he says, appealing more especially to the women-folk for sympathy. "Didn't I tell you? You saw all those golden plover yesterday, and the wild duck further up the loch: there is not a sign of one of them! I knew it would be so. As sure as Monday begins, you never get a chance! I will undertake to say that when we get to those islands where all the seals were yesterday, we shan't see one to-day!"

"But are we to stop here a whole day in order to let you go and shoot seals?" says his hostess.

"You can't help it," says he, laughing. "There isn't any wind."

"Angus," she says—as if nobody knew anything about the wind but the young Doctor—"is that so?"

"Not a doubt of it," he says. "But it is a beautiful day. You might make up a luncheon-party, and have a pic-nic by the side of the Saint's Well—down in the hollow, you know."

"Much chance I shall have with the seals, then!" remarks the other young man, good-naturedly enough.

However, it is enough that the suggestion has come from Angus Sutherland. A pic-nic on the Island of the Saints is forthwith commanded—seals or no seals. And while Master Fred, immediately after breakfast, begins his preparations, the Laird helps by carefully putting a corkscrew in his pocket. It is his invariable custom. We are ready for any emergency.

And if the golden plover, and mergansers, and seals appear to know that the new, busy, brisk working-days have begun again, surely we ought to know it too. Here are the same silent shores; and the calm blue seas and blue sky; and the solitary islands in the south—all just as they were yesterday; but we have a secret sense that the lassitude and idleness of Sunday are over, and that there is something of freedom in the air. The Laird has no longer any need to keep a check on his tongue: those stories about Homesh may bubble up to the surface of his mind just as they please. And indeed he is exceedingly merry and facetious as the preparations go on for this excursion. When at length he gets into the stern of the boat he says to his companion—

> *"There was Mary Beaton, and Mary Seaton,*
> *And Mary Avon, and me.*

—What ails ye, lass? I have not heard much of your singing of late."

"You would not have me sing profane songs on Sunday?" she says, demurely.

Digitized by Google

"No; but I mean long before Sunday. However," he says, cheerfully, and looking at her, "there is a wonderful change in ye—wonderful! Well do I mind the day I first saw ye, on the quay; though it seems a long time since then. Ye were a poor white bit thing then; I was astonished; and the next day too, when ye were lame as well, I said to myself, 'Well; it's high time that bit lass had a breath o' the sea air.' And now—why ye just mind me o' the lasses in the Scotch songs—the country lasses, ye know—with the fine colour on your face."

And indeed this public statement did not tend to decrease the sun-brown that now tinged Mary Avon's cheeks.

"These lads," said he—no doubt referring to his nephew and to Angus Sutherland, who were both labouring at the long oars—"are much too attentive to ye, putting ye under the shadow of the sails, and bringing ye parasols and things like that. No, no; don't you be afraid of getting sun-burned; it is a comely and wholesome thing: is it not reasonable that human beings need the sunlight as much as plants? Just ask your friend Dr. Sutherland that; though a man can guess as much without a microscope. Keep ye in the sun, Miss Mary; never mind the brown on your cheeks, whatever the young men say: I can tell ye ye are looking a great deal better now than when ye stepped on shore—a shilpit pale bit thing—on that afternoon."

Miss Avon had not been in the habit of receiving lectures like this about her complexion, and she seemed rather confused; but fortunately the measured noise of the rowlocks prevented the younger men from overhearing.

"There was Mary Beaton, and Mary Seaton,
And Mary Avon, and me"—

continued the Laird, in his facetious way; and he contentedly patted the hand of the girl beside him. "I fear I am growing very fond of idleness."

"I am sure, sir, you are so busy during the rest of the year," says this base flatterer, "that you should be able to enjoy a holiday with a clear conscience."

"Well, perhaps so—perhaps so," said the Laird, who was greatly pleased. "And yet, let one work as hard as one can, it is singular how little one can do, and what little thanks ye get for doing it. I am sure those people in Strathgovan spend half their lives in fault-finding; and expect ye to do everything they can think of without asking them for a farthing. At the last meeting of the ratepayers in the Burgh Hall I heckled them, I can tell ye. I am not a good speaker—no, no; far from it; but I can speak plain. I use words that can be driven into people's heads; and I will say this, that some o' those people in Strathgovan have a skull of most extraordinar' thickness. But said I to them, 'Do ye expect us to work miracles? Are we to create things out of nothing? If the rates are not to be increased, where are the new

Digitized by Google

gas-lamps to come from? Do ye think we can multiply gas-lamps as the loaves and fishes were multiplied?' I'm thinking," added the Laird, with a burst of hearty laughter, "that the thickest-skulled of them all understood that—eh?"

"I should hope so," remarked Miss Avon.

Then the measured rattle of the oars: it wants hard pulling against this fiercely running tide; indeed, to cheat it in a measure, we have to keep working along the coast and across the mouth of Loch Swen.

> "*There was Mary Beaton, and Mary Seaton,*
> *And Mary Avon, and me*"—

says the Laird, as a playful introduction to another piece of talking. "I have been asking myself once or twice whether I know any one in the whole kingdom of Scotland better than you."

"Than me, sir?" she says, with a start of surprise.

"Yes," he says, sententiously. "That is so. And I have had to answer myself in the naygative. It is wonderful how ye get to know a person on board a yacht. I just feel as if I had spent years and years with ye; so that there is not any one I know with whom I am better acquaint. When ye come to Denny-mains, I shall be quite disappointed if ye look surprised or strange to the place. I have got it into my head that ye must have lived there all your life. Will ye undertake to say," he continues, in the same airy manner, "that ye do not know the little winding path that goes up through the trees to the flag-staff—eh?"

"I am afraid I don't remember it," she says, with a smile.

"Wait till ye see the sunsets ye can see from there!" he says, proudly. "We can see right across Glasgow to Tennants' Stalk; and in the afternoon the smoke is all turning red and brown with the sunset—many's and many's the time I have taken Tom Galbraith to the hill, and asked him whether they have finer sunsets at Naples or Venice. No, no; give me fire and smoke and meestery for a strong sunset. But just the best time of the year, as ye'll find out"—and here he looked in a kindly way at the girl—"where there is a bit wood near the house, is the spring-time. When ye see the primroses and the blue-bells about the roots of the trees—when ye see them so clear and bright among the red of the withered leaves—well, ye cannot help thinking about some of our old Scotch songs, and there's something in that that's just like to bring the tears to your een. We have a wonderful and great inheritance in these songs, as ye'll find out, my lass. You English know only of Burns; but a Scotchman, who is familiar with the ways and the feelings and the speech of the peasantry, has a sort o' uncomfortable impression that Burns is at times just a bit artifeecial and leeterary—especially when he is masquerading in fine English—though at other times ye get the real lilt—what a man would sing to himself when he was all alone at the plough, in the early morning, and listening to the birds around him. But there are others that we are proud of, too—Tannahill, and John

Digitized by Google

Mayne, that wrote about *Logan Braes;* and Hogg, and Motherwell: I'm sure o' this, that when ye read Motherwell's *Jeanie Morrison*, ye'll no be able to go on for greetin'."

"I beg your pardon?" said Miss Avon.

But the Laird is too intent on recalling some of the lines to notice that she has not quite understood him.

"They were school-mates," he says, in an absent way. "When school was over, they wandered away like lad and lass; and he writes the poem in after-life, and speaks to her he has never seen since.

"Oh, mind ye, love, how oft we left
The deavin' dinsome toun,
To wander by the green burn-side,
And hear its water croon?
The simmer leaves hung ower our heads,
The flowers burst round our feet;
And in the gloamin' o' the wood
The throssil whistled sweet.

. . . .

"And on the knowe aboon the burn
For hours thegither sat
In the silentness o' joy, till baith
Wi' very gladness grat!
Aye, aye, dear Jeanie Morrison,
Tears trinkled down your cheek,
Like dew-beads on a rose, yet nane
Had ony power to speak!"

The Laird's voice faltered for a moment; but he pretended he had great difficulty in remembering the poem, and confessed that he must have mixed up the verses. However, he said he remembered the last one.

"O dear, dear Jeanie Morrison,
Since we were sundered young,
I've never seen your face, nor heard
The music of your tongue;
But I could hug all wretchedness,
And happy could I dee,
Did I but kin your heart still dreamed
O' bygane days and me!"

Just as he finished, the old Laird turned aside his head. He seemed to be suddenly interested in something over at the mouth of Loch Swen. Then he quickly passed his red silk handkerchief across his face, and said, in a gay manner—though he was still looking in that alien direction—

"This is a desperate hard pull. We had nothing like this yesterday. But it will do the lads good; it will take the stiffness out of their backs."

However, one of the lads—to wit, the Laird's nephew—admitted at length that he had had quite enough of it, and gave up his oar to the

Digitized by Google

man he had relieved. Then he came into the stern, and was very pleasant and talkative; and said he had quite made up his mind to find all the seals gone from the shores of the sacred island.

So formidable, indeed, was the tide, that we had to keep well away to the south of the island before venturing to make across for it; and when at length we did put the bow straight for the little harbour, the mid-channel current swept us away northward, as if the gig had been a bit of cork. But the four oars kept manfully to their work; and by dint of hard pulling and pertinacious steering we managed to run into the little bay.

We found it quite deserted. The two lobster-fishers had left in the morning; we were in sole possession of this lonely island, set amid the still summer seas.

But by this time it was nearly noon; and so it was arranged that the men of the party should content themselves with a preliminary expedition, to find out, by stealthy crawlings out to the various bays, where the seals were chiefly congregated; while the women were to remain by the Saints' Well, to help Fred to get luncheon spread out and arranged. And this was done; and thus it happened that, after Master Fred had finished his work, and retired down to his mates in the gig, the two women-folk were left alone.

"Why, Mary," said the one of them, quite cheerfully (as we afterwards heard), "it is quite a long time since you and I had a chat together."

"Yes, it is."

"One gets so often interfered with on board, you know. Aren't you going to begin now and make a sketch?"

She had brought with her her sketching materials; but they were lying unopened on a rock hard by.

"No, I think not," she said, listlessly.

"What is the matter with you?" said her kind friend, pretending to laugh at her. "I believe you are fretting over the loss of the money, after all."

"Oh, no: I hope you do not think I am fretting!" said she, anxiously. "No one has said that? I am really quite content—I am very—happy."

She managed to say the word.

"I am very glad to hear it," said her friend; "but I have a great mind to scold you all the same."

The girl looked up. Her friend went over to her, and sate down beside her, and took her hand in hers.

"Don't be offended, Mary," she said, good-naturedly. "I have no right to interfere; but Angus is an old friend of mine. Why do you treat him like that?"

The girl looked at her with a sort of quick, frightened, inquiring glance; and then said—as if she were almost afraid to hear herself speak—

Digitized by Google

"Has he spoken to you?"

"Yes. Now don't make a mole-hill into a mountain, Mary. If he has offended you, tell him. Be frank with him. He would not vex you for the world: do you think he would?"

The girl's hand was beginning to tremble a good deal; and her face was white, and piteous.

"If you only knew him as well as I do, you would know he is as gentle as a child: he would not offend any one. Now, you will be friends with him again, Mary?"

The answer was a strange one. The girl broke into a fit of wild crying, and hid her face in her friend's bosom, and sobbed there so that her whole frame was shaken with the violence of her misery.

"Mary, what is it?" said the other, in great alarm.

Then, by-and-by, the girl rose, and went away over to her sketching materials for a minute or two. Then she returned: her face still rather white, but with a certain cold and determined look on it.

"It is all a mistake," said she, speaking very distinctly. "Dr. Sutherland has not offended me in the least: please tell him so if he speaks again. I hope we shall always be good friends."

She opened out her colour-box.

"And then," said she, with an odd laugh, "before you think I have gone crazed, please remember it isn't every day one loses such an enormous fortune as mine."

She began to get her other sketching things ready. And she was very cheerful about it, and very busy; and she was heard to be singing to herself—

"Then fill up a bumper: what can I do less
Than drink to the health of my bonny Black Bess?"

But her friend, when by chance she turned her head a little bit, perceived that the pale and piteous face was still wet with tears; and the praises of Black Bess did not wholly deceive her.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"But if she says 'Yes?'"

Digitized by Google

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MAY, 1881.

will come up on the rocks. So the best thing we can do is to spend plenty of time over our luncheon, and cross the island again in the after-

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MAY, 1880.

White Wings: A Yachting Romance.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A Confession.

WHAT could the solitary scouts, coming back from the various points of the island, know of this quick, unwilling cry of pain, and of the forced calm that followed it? They had their own sorrows. There was a gloom upon their faces. One and all bore the same story—not a seal, not a wild duck, not even a rock pigeon anywhere.

"But it is a fine thing to be able to straighten one's back," says the Laird, who always seizes on the cheerful side; "and we have not given up hope of your getting the sealskin yet, Miss Mary—no, no. The Doctor says they are away hunting just now; when the tide gets low again they will come up on the rocks. So the best thing we can do is to spend plenty of time over our luncheon, and cross the island again in the after-

Digitized by Google

noon. Aye; begun already?" adds the Laird, as he goes up to the canvas, and regards the rough outlines in charcoal with a critical air. "Very good! very good!" he says, following the lines with his thumb, and apparently drawing in the air. "Excellent! The composeetion very clever indeed—simple, bold, striking. And a fine blaze of colour ye'll have on a day like this; and then the heavy black hull of the smack bang in the foreground: excellent, excellent! But if I were you, I would leave out that rock there; ye would get a better sweep of the sea. Don't distract the eye in sea pieces; bold lines—firm, sound colour: and there ye are. Well, my lass, ye have the skill of constructing a picture. Tom Galbraith himself would admit that, I know——"

But here the Laird is called away by his hostess.

"I would advise you, sir," says she, "to have some luncheon while you can get it. It is a very strange thing, with all you gentlemen on board, and with all those guns lying about, but we are drawing nearer and nearer to starvation. I wish you would give up hunting seals, and shoot something useful."

Here our young Doctor appears with certain bottles that have been cooling in the water.

"There must be plenty of rock pigeons in the caves we passed this morning, on the other island," he says.

"Oh, not those beautiful birds!" says she of the empty larder. "We cannot have Hurlingham transported to the Highlands."

"Whoever tries to shoot those pigeons won't find it a Hurlingham business," he remarks.

But the Laird has a soul above luncheons, and larders, and pigeon-shooting. He is still profoundly absorbed in thought.

"No," he says, at length, to the young lady who, as usual, is by his side. "I am wrong!"

She looks up at him with some surprise.

"Yes, I am wrong," he says decisively. "Ye must keep in that island. Ye must sacrifice picturesqueness to truth. Never mind the picture: keep the faithful record. In after life ye will be able to get plenty of pictures; but ye may not be able to get an exact record of the things ye saw when ye were sailing with the *White Dove*."

"Well, you know, sir," observes Miss Avon, with a somewhat embarrassed smile, "you don't give me much encouragement. You always speak as if I were to be compelled to keep those sketches. Am I to find nobody silly enough to buy them?"

Now, somehow or other of late, the Laird has been more and more inclined to treat this sale of Mary Avon's pictures as a most irresistible joke. He laughs and chuckles at the mere mention of such a thing, just as if Homesh were somewhere about.

"Sell them!" he says, with another deep chuckle. "Ye will never sell them. Ye could not have the heart to part with them."

Digitized by Google

"The heart has to be kept in proper subjection," says she, lightly, "when one has to earn one's living."

Queen Titania glances quickly at the girl; but apparently there is no profound meaning concealed in this speech. Miss Avon has taken her seat on a shelving piece of grey rock; and, if she is concerned about anything, it is about the safety of certain plates and knives and such things. Her hand is quite steady as she holds out her tumbler for the Youth to pour some water into the claret.

Luncheon over, she returns to her work; and the band of seal hunters, taking to cigars and pipes, sit and watch the tide slowly ebb away from the golden-brown seaweed. Then, with many a caution as to patience and silence, they rise and get their guns and set out. Already there is a disposition to slouch the head and walk timidly; though as yet there is no need of any precaution.

"*Glückliche Reise!*" says Miss Avon, pleasantly, as we pass.

Angus Sutherland starts, and turns his head. But the salutation was not for him; it was meant for the Youth, who is understood to be the most eager of the seal hunters. And Mr. Smith, not having his answer pat, replies, "I hope so;" and then looks rather confused as he passes on, carefully stooping his head though there is no occasion whatever.

Then, by following deep gullies and crawling over open ledges, we reach points commanding the various bays; and with the utmost caution peer over or round the rocks. And whereas yesterday, being Sunday, the bays were alive with seals, disporting themselves freely in full view of a large party of people who were staring at them, to-day, being Monday, finds not a seal visible anywhere, though every one is in hiding, and absolute silence must have reigned in the island, ever since the lobster fishers left in the morning. No matter; the tide is still ebbing; the true hunter must possess his soul.

And yet this lying prone for hours on a ledge of exceedingly rough rock must have been monotonous work for our good friend the Laird. Under his nose nothing to look at but scraps of orange lichen and the stray feathers of sea birds; abroad nothing but the glassy blue sea, with the pale mountains of Jura rising into the cloudless sky. At last it seemed to become intolerable. We could see him undergoing all sorts of contortions in the effort to wrest something out of his coat-pocket without raising any portion of his body above the line of cover. He himself was not unlike a grey seal in the shadow of the rock, especially when he twisted and turned himself about without rising an inch from the surface. And in time he succeeded. We could see him slowly and carefully unfold that newspaper—probably not more than a week old—just beneath his face. He had no need of spectacles: his eyes were almost touching the page. And then we knew that he was at rest; and the hard rock and the seals all forgotten. For we took it that this local paper was one which had written a most important leading article about the proposed public park for Strathgovan, calling upon the ratepayers to arise and

Digitized by Google

assert their rights and put a check on the reckless extravagance of the Commissioners. The Laird himself was openly pointed at as one who would introduce the luxury of the later Romans into a sober Scotch community; and there were obscure references to those who seemed to consider that a man's dwelling-house should become nothing more nor less than a museum of pictures and statues, while they would apply taxes raised from a hard-working population in the adornment of places of recreation for the idle. But do you think that the Laird was appalled by this fierce onslaught? Not a bit of it. He had read and re-read it to us with delight. He had triumphantly refuted the writer's sophistries; he had exposed his ignorance of the most elementary facts in political economy; he was always rejoiced to appear before Tom Galbraith and Mary Avon as one who was not afraid to suffer for his championship of art. And then, when he had triumphed over his enemy, he would fold the paper with a sort of contented sigh; and would say with a compassionate air, "Poor crayture! poor crayture!" as if the poor crayture could not be expected to know any better.

At last—at last! The Laird makes frantic gestures with his newspaper—all the more frantic that they have to be strictly lateral, and that he dare not raise his hand. And behold! far away out there on the still, blue surface, a smooth round knob, shining and black. Without a muscle moving, eager eyes follow that distant object. The seal is not alarmed or suspicious; he sails evenly onward, seldom looking to right or left. And when he disappears there is no splash; he has had enough of breathing; he is off for his hunting in the deep seas.

What is more, he remains there. We catch no further trace of him, nor of any other living thing around those deserted bays. Human nature gives in. The Youth gets up, and boldly displays himself on a promontory, his gun over his shoulder. Then the Laird, seeing that everything is over, gets up too, yawning dreadfully, and folds his newspaper, and puts it in his pocket.

"Come along!" he calls out. "It is no use. The saints have taught the seals tricks. They know better than to come near on a working day."

And so presently the sombre party sets out again for the other side of the island, where the gig awaits us. Not a word is said. Cartridges are taken out; we pick our way through the long grass and the stones. And when it is found that Miss Avon has roughed in all that she requires of her present study, it is gloomily suggested that we might go back by way of the other island, that so haply we might secure the materials for a pigeon pie before returning to the yacht.

The evening sun was shining ruddily along the face of the cliffs as we drew near the other island; and there was no sign of life at all about the lonely shores and the tall caves. But there was another story to tell when, the various guns having been posted, the Youth boldly walked up to the mouth of the largest of the caves, and shouted.

Digitized by Google

Presently there were certain flashes of blue things in the mellow evening light; and the sharp bang! bang! of the gun, that echoed into the great hollows. Hurlingham? That did not seem much of a Hurlingham performance. There were no birds standing bewildered on the fallen trap, wondering whether to rise or not; but there were things coming whizzing through the air that resembled nothing so much as rifle bullets with blue wings. The Youth, it is true, got one or two easy shots at the mouth of the cave; but when the pigeons got outside and came flashing over the heads of the others, the shooting was, on the whole, a haphazard business. Nevertheless, we got a fair number for Master Fred's larder, after two of the men had acted as retrievers for three-quarters of an hour among the rocks and bushes. Then away again for the solitary vessel lying in the silent loch, with the pale mists stealing over the land, and the red sun sinking behind the Jura hills.

Again, after dinner, amid the ghostly greys of the twilight, we went forth on another commissariat excursion, to capture fish. Strange to say, however, our Doctor, though he was learned on the subject of flies and tackle, preferred to remain on board: he had some manuscript to send off to London. And his hostess said she would remain, too; she always has plenty to do about the saloon. Then we left the *White Dove* and rowed away to the rocks.

But the following conversation, as we afterwards heard, took place in our absence:—

"I wished very much to speak to you," said Angus Sutherland, to his hostess, without making any movement to bring out his desk.

"I thought so," said she; not without a little nervous apprehension.

And then she said quickly, before he could begin—

"Let me tell you at once, Angus, that I have spoken to Mary. Of course, I don't wish to interfere; I wouldn't interfere for the world; but—but I only asked her, lest there should be any unpleasant misapprehension, whether she had any reason to be offended with you. 'None in the least,' she said. She was most positive. She even seemed to be deeply pained by the misunderstanding; and—and wished me to let you know; so you must dismiss that from your mind anyway."

He listened thoughtfully, without saying anything. At last he said—

"I have determined to be quite frank with you. I am going to tell you a secret—if it is a secret——"

"I have guessed it," she said, quickly, to spare him pain.

"I thought so," he said, quite quietly. "Well; I am not ashamed of it. I have no reason to be ashamed of it. But, since you know, you will see that it would be very embarrassing for me to remain longer on board the yacht if—if there was no hope——"

He turned over the leaves of a guide-book rapidly, without looking at them; the hard-headed Doctor had not much command over himself at this moment.

Digitized by Google

"If you have guessed, why not she?" he said, in a somewhat hurried and anxious manner. "And—and—if I am to go, better that I should know at once. I—I have nothing to complain of—I mean I have nothing to reproach her with—if it is a misfortune, it is a misfortune—but—but she used to be more friendly towards me."

These two were silent. What was passing before their minds? The long summer evenings in the far northern seas, with the glory dying in the west; or the moonlight walks on the white deck, with the red star of Ushinish lighthouse burning in the south; or the snug saloon below, with its cards, and candles, and laughter, and Mary Avon singing to herself the song of Ulva? She sang no song of Ulva now.

"Mary and I are very intimate friends," says the other deliberately. "I will say nothing against her. Girls have curious fancies about such things sometimes. But I must admit—for you are my friend, too—that I am not surprised you should have been encouraged by her manner to you at one time, or that you should wonder a little at the change."

But even this mild possibility of Mary Avon's being in the wrong she feels to be incompatible with her customary championship of her friend; and so she instantly says—

"Mind, I am certain of this—that whatever Mary does, she believes to be right. Her notion of duty is extraordinarily sensitive and firm. Once she has put anything before her as the proper thing to be done, she goes straight at it; and nothing will turn her aside. And although there is something about it I can't quite understand, how am I to interfere? Interference never does any good. Why do not you ask her yourself?"

"I mean to do so, when I get the chance," said he, simply. "I merely wished to tell you that, if her answer is 'No,' it will be better for me to leave you. Already I fancy my being on board the yacht is a trouble to her. I will not be a trouble to her. I can go. If it is a misfortune, there is no one to blame."

"But if she says '*Yes!*'" cried his friend; and there was a wonderful joy in her eyes, and in her excess of sympathy she caught his hand for a moment. "Oh, Angus, if Mary were to promise to be your wife! What a trip we should have then—we should take the *White Dove* to Stornoway!"

That was her ultimate notion of human happiness—sailing the *White Dove* up to Stornoway!

"I don't think there is much hope," said he, rather absently, "from her manner of late. But anything is better than suspense. If it is a misfortune, as I say, there is no one to blame. I had not the least notion that she knew Mr. Howard Smith in London."

"Nor did she."

He stared rather.

"They may have met at our house; but certainly not more than once. You see, living in a country house, we have to have our friends

Digitized by Google

down in a *staccato* fashion, and always by arrangement of a few at a time. There is no general dropping in to afternoon tea."

"He never met her in London?" he repeated.

"I should think not."

"His uncle, then: did she never see him before?"

"Certainly not."

"Then what does he mean by treating her as a sort of familiar friend who was likely to turn up any time at Denny-mains?"

His companion coloured somewhat; for she had no right to betray confidences.

"The Laird is very fond of Mary," she said, evasively. "It is quite beautiful to see those two together."

He sate for a little time in silence; and then begged to be excused—he would go on deck to smoke. But when, some little time thereafter, we returned from our brief fishing, the dark figure walking up and down the deck was not smoking at all. He paused as the gig was hauled fast to the gangway.

"What luck?"

"About two dozen."

"All lithe?"

"About half-a-dozen mackerel."

And then he assisted Mary Avon to ascend the small wooden steps. She said 'Thank you!' as she withdrew her hand from his; but the words were uttered in a low voice; and she instantly crossed to the companion and went below. He stayed on deck, and helped to swing the gig up to the davits.

Now something had got into the head of our Admiral-in-chief that night. She was very merry; and very affectionate towards Mary. She made light of her foolish wish to go away to the south. She pointed out that this continuous fine weather was only hoarding up electricity for the equinoctials; and then we should have a spin!

"We are not going to let you go, Mary; that is the long and the short of it. And we are going to keep hold of Angus, too. He is not going away yet—no, no. We have something for him to do. We shall not rest satisfied until we see him sail the *White Dove* into Stornoway harbour!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Only a Headache.

Stornoway harbour, indeed! The weather was laughing at us. The glass had steadily fallen until it had got about as low as it could go with decency; and yet this next morning was more beautiful, and bright, and calm than ever! Were we to be for ever confined in this remote Loch of the Burying Place?

Digitized by Google

"Angus! Angus! where are you?" the Admiral calls out, as she comes up on deck.

"Here I am," calls out a voice in return, from the cross-trees.

She raises her head, and perceives the ruddy-faced Doctor hanging on by the ratlines.

"Where is the fine sailing weather you were to bring us—eh?"

"I have been looking for it," he replies, as he comes down the rigging; "and there is not a breath anywhere."

"Very well," she says, promptly; "I'll tell you what you must do. You must get everybody who can handle a gun into the gig and go away up to the head of the loch there, and shoot every living thing you can see. Do you understand? We are on the brink of starvation! We are perishing! Do you want us to boil tarred rope into soup?"

"No," he says, humbly.

"Very well. Away you go. If you can't bring us any wind to take us into a civilised place, you must provide us with food; is that clear enough?"

Here Captain John comes aft, touching his cap.

"Good morning, mem! I was never seeing the like of this weather, mem."

"I don't want to see any more of it," she says, sharply. "Did you bring us in here because there was a convenient place to bury us in? Do you know that we are dying of starvation?"

"Oh, no, mem!" says Captain John, with a grin; but looking rather concerned all the same.

However, her attention is quickly called away by the sound of oars. She turns and regards this small boat approaching the yacht; and the more she looks the more do her eyes fill with astonishment.

"Well, I declare!" she says. "This is about the coolest thing I have seen for ages."

For it is Miss Mary Avon who is rowing the dingay back to the yacht; and her only companion is the Youth, who is contentedly seated in the stern, with his gun laid across his knees.

"Good morning, Mr. Smith!" she says, with the most gracious sarcasm. "Pray don't exert yourself too much. Severe exercise before breakfast is very dangerous."

The Youth lays hold of the rope; there is a fine blush on his handsome face.

"It is Miss Avon's fault," he says; "she would not let me row."

"I suppose she expected you to shoot? Where are the duck, and the snipe, and the golden plover? Hand them up!"

"If you want to see anything in the shape of game about this coast, you'd better wait till next Sunday," says he, somewhat gloomily.

However, after breakfast, we set out for the shallow head of the loch; and things do not turn out so badly after all. For we have only left the yacht some few minutes when there is a sudden whirring of

Digitized by Google

wings—a call of "Duck! duck!"—and the Doctor, who is at the bow, and who is the only one who is ready, fires a snap-shot at the birds. Much to everybody's amazement, one drops, and instantly dives. Then begins an exciting chase. The *biorlinn* is sent careering with a vengeance; the men strain every muscle; and then another cry directs attention to the point at which the duck has reappeared. It is but for a second. Though he cannot fly, he can swim like a fish; and from time to time, as the hard pulling enables us to overtake him, we can see him shooting this way or that through the clear water. Then he bobs his head up, some thirty or forty yards off; and there is another snap-shot—the charge rattling on the water the fifth part of an instant *after* he disappears.

"Dear me!" says the Laird; "that bird will cost us ten shillings in cartridges!"

But at last he is bagged. A chance shot happens to catch him before he dives; he is stretched on the water, with his black webbed feet in the air; and a swoop of Captain John's arm brings him dripping into the gig. And then our natural history is put to the test. This is no gay-plumaged sheldrake, or blue-necked mallard, or saw-toothed merganser. It is a broad-billed duck, of a sooty black and grey; we begin to regret our expenditure of cartridges; experiments on the flavour of unknown sea birds are rarely satisfactory. But Captain John's voice is authoritative and definite. "It is a fine bird," he says. And Master Fred has already marked him for his own.

Then among the shallows at the head of the loch there is many a wild pull after broods of flappers, and random firing at the circling curlew. The air is filled with the calling of the birds; and each successive shot rattles away with its echo among the silent hills. What is the result of all this noise and scramble? Not much, indeed; for right in the middle of it we are attracted by a strange appearance in the south. That dark line beyond the yacht: is it a breeze coming up the loch? Instantly the chase after mergansers ceases; cartridges are taken out; the two or three birds we have got are put out of the way; and the Laird, taking the tiller ropes, sits proud and erect. Away go the four oars with the precision of machinery; and the long sweep sends the gig ahead at a swinging pace. Behold! behold! the dark blue on the water widening! Is it a race between the wind and the gig as to which will reach the *White Dove* first?

"Give me your oar, Fred!" says the Doctor, who is at the bow.

There is but a momentary pause. Again the shapely boat swings along; and with the measured beat of the oars comes the old familiar chorus—

> . . . *Cheerily, and all together!—*
> *Ho, ro, clansmen!*
> *A long, strong pull together!—*
> *Ho, ro, clansmen!*

Digitized by Google

Soon the flowing breeze will blow;
We'll show the snowy canvas on her—
Ho, ro, clansmen!
A long, strong pull together!—
Ho, ro, clansmen!
Wafted by the breeze of morn
We'll quaff the joyous horn together!—
Ho, ro, clansmen!
A long, strong pull together!—
Ho, ro, clansmen!

"We'll beat! we'll beat!" cries the Laird, in great delight. "Give it her, boys! Not one halfpennyworth o' that wind will we lose!"

The bow cleaves the blue water; the foam hisses away from her rudder. It is a race of the North against the South. Then the chorus again—

Ho, ro, clansmen!
A long, strong pull together!—
Ho, ro, clansmen!

Hurrah! hurrah! As the gig is run alongside, and guns and birds handed up, that spreading blue has not quite reached the yacht; there is no appreciable stir of the lazy ensign. But there is little time to be lost. The amateurs swing the gig to the davits, while the men are getting in the slack of the anchor chain; the women are incontinently bundled below, to be out of the way of flapping sheets. Then, all hands at the halyards! And by the time the great White Wings are beginning to spread, the breeze stirs the still air around us; and the peak sways gently this way and that; and they who are hard at work at the windlass are no doubt grateful for this cool blowing from the south. Then there is a cessation of noise; we become vaguely aware that we are moving. At last the *White Dove* has spread her wings; her head is turned towards the south. Good-bye! you lonely loch, with the silent shores and the silent tombs—a hundred farewells to you, wherever we may be going!

And slowly we beat down the loch, against this light southerly breeze. But as we get further and further into the open, surely there is something in the air and in the appearance of the southern sky that suggests that the glass has not been falling for nothing. The sea is smooth; but there is a strange gloom ahead of us; and beyond the islands that we visited yesterday nothing is visible but a wan and sultry glare. Then, afar, we can hear a noise as of the approach of some storm; but perhaps it is only the low sound of the swirling of the tides round the shores. Presently another sound attracts attention—a murmured hissing, and it comes nearer and nearer; dark spots, about the size of a threepenny-piece, appear on the white decks. The women have scarcely time to send below for their sunshades when the slight shower passes by—the decks are not even left damp. Then further and further we creep away towards

Digitized by Google

the south; but where we expected to catch some far glimpse of the Irish coast—the blue line of Rathlin or the Antrim cliffs—there is only that dim, sultry haze.

Then another sound—a dull *flop! flop!*—in the distance; and the stragglers who have remained below after luncheon are hastily summoned on deck. And there, far away in the haze, we can dimly descry the successive curved forms of a school of dolphins, racing each other, and springing twenty or thirty feet in the air before they come down with that heavy thud on the water. Those of us who have watched the beautiful lithe fish racing and chasing by the side of an Atlantic vessel, would fain have been somewhat nearer; but we can only see the dim forms springing into the haze. Then the dull pistol-shots in the south slowly cease, and we are left alone on the low murmuring sea.

"But where is Miss Mary?" says the Laird, suddenly becoming aware of the absence of his chief companion.

"Oh, she is in the saloon!" says his hostess, quickly and anxiously. "She is doing something to one of her water-colours. I suppose we must not disturb her."

"No, no; certainly not," returns the Laird, lightly; and then he adds, with a smile which is meant to be very significant, "There is never any harm in hard work. Let her go on; she will have a fine collection of sketches before she leaves the *White Dove*."

But our Queen Tita does not respond to that careless joke. There is a curious, constrained look on her face; and she quite peremptorily negatives a suggestion of the Youth that he should go below for the draught-board. Then one of us perceives that Angus Sutherland is not on deck.

Has the opportunity come at last, then, for the clearing away of all secret troubles? What end is there to be to this momentous interview? Is it Stornoway harbour? Is our frank-eyed young Doctor to come up with a silent wonder and joy on his face—a message that needs no speech—message that only says, "About with the yacht, and let us run away to the northern seas and Stornoway?" The friend of these two young people can hardly conceal her anxiety. She has got hold of the case of an opera glass, and opens and shuts it quickly and aimlessly. Then there is a step on the companion way; she does not look; she only knows that Angus Sutherland comes on deck, and then goes forward to the bow of the gig, and stands by himself, and looks out to sea.

There is silence on board; for a low rumble of thunder has been heard once or twice, and we are listening. The mountains of Jura are dark now, and the sultry mist in the south is deeper in its gloom. This condition of the atmosphere produces a vague sense of something about to happen, which is in itself uncomfortable; one would almost like to see a flash of lightning, or hear the thunderous advance of a storm breaking in upon the oppressive calm.

The Laird goes forward to Angus Sutherland.

"Well, Doctor, and what think ye of the weather now?"

Digitized by Google

The younger man starts and turns round, and for a second looks at the Laird as if he had not quite comprehended the question.

"Oh, yes!" he says. "You are quite right. It does look as if we were going to have a dirty night."

And with that he turns to the sea again.

"Aye," says the Laird, sententiously. "I am glad we are in a boat we need have no fear of—none! Keep her away from the shore, and we are all right. But—but I suppose we will get into some harbour to-night, after all?"

"It does not matter," he says, absently; and then he goes away up to the bow. He is alone there; for the men have gone below for dinner—with the exception of John of Skye, who is at the helm.

Presently the special friend of the young man puts aside that opera-glass case, and walks timidly forward to the bow of the yacht. She regards him somewhat anxiously; but his face is turned away from her—looking over to the gloomy Jura hills.

"Angus," she says, briskly, "are we not going very near Jura, if it is West Loch Tarbert we are making for?"

He turned to her then, and she saw by his face that something had happened.

"You have spoken to her, Angus?" she said, in a low voice; and her earnest, kind eyes regarded the young man as if to anticipate his answer.

"Yes."

For a second or so he seemed disinclined to say more; but presently he added, scarcely looking at her—

"I am sorry that I must leave you the first time we get near land."

"Oh, Angus!"

It was almost a cry—uttered in that low, piteous voice. Then he looked at her.

"You have been very kind to me," said he, so that no one should hear. "It is only a misfortune. But I wish I had never seen the *White Dove*."

"Oh, Angus; don't say that!"

"It is my own fault. I should never have come from Edinburgh. I knew that. I knew I was hazarding everything. And she is not to blame——"

He could say no more, for one or two of the men now came up from the forecastle. His hostess left him and went aft, with a hurt and indignant look on her face. When the Laird asked why Miss Mary did not come on deck, she said, "I don't know," with an air which said she had ceased to take any further care in Mary Avon's actions. And at dinner, what heed did she pay to the fact that Mary Avon was rather white, and silent, and pained-looking? She had been disappointed. She had not expected the friend of her bosom to act in this heartless manner. And as for Howard Smith, she treated that young gentleman with a cold courtesy which rather astonished him.

Digitized by Google

After dinner, when the men folk had gone on deck, and when she was preparing to go too, a timid, appealing hand was laid on her arm.

"I would like to speak to you," said the low voice of Mary Avon.

Then she turned—only for a second.

"I think I know enough of what has happened, Mary," said she; "and it would not be right for me to intermeddle. Young people are the best judges of their own affairs."

The appealing hand was withdrawn; the girl retired to the saloon, and sate down alone.

But here, on deck, an eager council of war was being held; and Angus Sutherland was as busy as any one with the extended chart—the soundings barely visible in the waning light—and proposals and counter-proposals were being freely bandied about. Night was coming on; dirty-looking weather seemed to be coming up from the south; and the mouth of West Loch Tarbert is narrow and shallow in parts, and studded with rocks—a nasty place to enter in the dark. Moreover, when should we get there, beating against this south-easterly wind? What if we were to put her head round, and run for some improvised harbour among the small islands under the shadow of the Jura hills, and wait there for daylight to show us across the Sound?

There was but one dissentient. Angus Sutherland seemed oddly anxious to get to West Loch Tarbert. He would himself take the helm all night; if only the men would take their turn at the look-out, one at a time. He was sure he could make the channel, if we reached the mouth of the loch before daylight. What! with nothing shallower on the chart than four fathoms! How could there be any danger?

But the more prudent counsels of John of Skye at length prevail, and there is a call to the men forward to stand by. Then down goes the helm; her head slews round with a rattling of blocks and cordage; the sheets of the head-sails are belayed to leeward; and then, with the boom away over the starboard davits, we are running free before this freshening breeze.

But the night is dark as we cautiously creep in under the vast shadows of the Jura hills. Fortunately in here the wind is light; the *White Dove* seems to feel her way through the gloom. All eyes are on the look-out; and there is a general shout as we nearly run on a buoy set to mark a sunken ship. But we glide by in safety; and in due course of time the roar of the anchor chain tells us that we are snug for the night.

"But where is Miss Mary?" says the Laird, in the cheerfully-lit saloon. He looks around him in an uncomfortable and unsettled way. The saloon is not the saloon when Mary Avon is out of it; here is her chair next to his as usual, but it is vacant. How are we to spend the last happy hour of chatting and joking without the pleased, bright face, and the timid, gentle, shy, dark eyes?

"Mary has gone to her cabin," says her hostess. "I suppose she has a headache."

Digitized by Google

She supposes the girl has a headache, and has not asked! And can it be really Mary Avon that she is speaking of in that cold, hurt, offended way?

CHAPTER XXXIV.

In the Dark.

And then the next morning the Laird is infinitely distressed.

"What! not better yet?" he says. "Dear me! I wish I could be a woman for a while, to take some tea in to her, and read to her, and coax her into better spirits. What a bad headache it must be!"

But this generous sympathy on the part of one who is little more than an acquaintance touches the heart of Mary Avon's particular friend. She reproaches herself for her cruelty. She not only gets the tea and takes it into the cabin, but she adopts a domineering tone, and declares that until the young lady begins her breakfast she will not leave the place. And then she looks at the timid, worn face; and her hand is placed gently on the hand of her friend, and she says in a lower voice—

"Mary, don't think I am angry. I am only a little bit disappointed. But I don't blame you—you could not help it. It is a pity; that is all."

The girl's face remains rather sad; but she is quite self-possessed.

"You will let me go away," she says, looking down, "when we get to some harbour?"

"There is no need," says her friend, regarding her. "Angus will leave us to-day, as soon as we get across to Cantyre."

"Oh!" she said quickly, and looking up with a brief appeal in her eyes. "I hope not! Why should he go away? I must go; I would rather go."

"Oh, no, Mary!" her friend said. "If there is any 'must' in the matter, it is on his side; for you know his time is very valuable, and you must have guessed why he has already far exceeded what he proposed to himself as his holiday. No, no, Mary; let us forget what has happened as soon as we can, and make the best of the rest of our sailing. The Laird would have a fit, if you seriously threatened to go. And I am sure you are not to blame."

So she kissed her on the cheek, by way of reconciliation, and left. And she told the Laird that Mary had been dutiful, and had taken some breakfast, and would be up on deck in course of time.

Meanwhile, those who had gone on deck had found the *White Dove* lying in a dead calm, some three miles away from her anchorage of the previous night; her sails hanging limp; a scorching sun on the white decks, and a glare of light coming from the blue sky and the glassy blue sea.

"Well, Angus," says his hostess, very merrily—for she does not wish to let the others guess the reason of his sudden departure; "you see the

Digitized by Google

weather does not approve of your leaving us. What has become of your thunderstorm? Where is the gale from the south, John?"

"I was never seeing the like of this weather, mem," said the bearded skipper. Then he added, anxiously, "And is Dr. Sutherland himself going away from the yat?"

"He would like to," she says; "but how is he ever to see land again if you banish the wind so?"

"But it will no be like this long!" says Captain John, eagerly—for he appears to think that Dr. Sutherland has got tired of the fine weather. "Oh, no, mem! I will answer for it. If Dr. Sutherland will wait another day, or two days, I am sure there will be plenty of wind. And we can lie in West Loch Tarbert for one day, or two days——"

"And starve?" she says, abruptly.

But now it appears that one or two of the men have heard of a mysterious village lying somewhere inland from the mouth of the loch; and from a comparison of these vague rumours we gather that we may not be so far from civilisation after all. Perhaps we may once again behold loaf-bread. Visions of cutlets, fowls, grouse, and hares arise. We shall once more hear some echo of the distant world if perchance there be in the place a worn and ancient newspaper.

"Aye," said the Laird, hastily. "I would like to see a Glasgow newspaper! I'm thinking they must have got the steam fire-engine by now; and fine games the bairns will have when they begin to practise with it, skelping about in the water. It would be a grand thing to try it in the public garden when we get it; it would keep the shrubs and the borders fine and wet—eh?"

"And it would be quite as interesting as any plaster fountain," says his hostess, encouragingly.

"As handsome every bit," says the Laird, laughing heartily at his play of imagination, "as any bit laddie done up in stucco, standing on one leg, and holding up a pipe! It's a utilitarian age, ma'am—a utilitarian age; we will have instead of a fountain a steam fire-engine—very good! very good!—and they bodies who are always crying out against expenditure on decoration will be disappointed for once."

The Laird had at last discovered the whereabouts of the mysterious village on the Admiralty chart.

"But what newspaper will we get in a place hidden away like that?—out of the reach of all communication wi' the world. They'll be a century behind, mark my words. It is when ye live within a reasonable distance of a great centre of ceevilisation, like Glasgow, that ye feel the life of it stirring your own place too; and ye must keep up with the times; ye must be moving. Conservative as I am, there is no supersteetious obstinacy about me; moving—moving—that's the word. The more important the matter in the interest of the public, the more necessary is it that we should have an impartial mind. If ye show me a new sort of asphalte, do ye think I would not examine it, jist because I recommended Jamieson and MacGregor's patent?"

Digitized by Google

He appealed boldly to his hostess.

"Oh, certainly; certainly you would!" she says, with an earnestness that might have made Jamieson and MacGregor quail.

"For three weeks," says the Laird, solemnly, "I was on that committee, until it seemed that my breakfast, and my dinner, and my supper every day was nothing but tar-smoke. What wi' the experiments without and within, I was just filled with tar-smoke. And would ye believe it, ma'am, one o' they Radical newspapers went as far as to say there were secret influences at work when Jamieson and MacGregor was decided on. My friends said, 'Prosecute the man for libel;' but I said 'No; let the poor crayture alone; he has got to earn his living!'"

"That was very wise of you, sir," says his hostess.

"Bless me! If a man in public life were to heed everything that's said about him," observes the Laird, with a fine air of unconcern, "what would become of his time? No, no; that is not the principle on which a public man should found his life. Do your best for your fellow-creatures, and let the squabblers say what they like. As ah say, the poor wretches have to earn their living."

Here Mary Avon appeared, somewhat pale and tired-looking; and the Laird instantly went to condole with her, and to get her a deck chair, and what not. At the same moment, too, our young Doctor came along—perhaps with a brave desire to put an end to her embarrassment at once—and shook hands with her, and said "Good morning; I hope your headache is better." Her hand was trembling as it fell away from his; and her "Yes, thank you," was almost inaudible. Then she sate down, and the Laird resumed his discourse.

"I was once taken," said he, "by a fellow-commissioner of mine to a sort of singing place, or music hall, in Glasgow."

"What?"

"They wanted to have some such place in Strathgovan," continued the Laird, paying no heed; "and I was asked to go and see what sort of entertainment was provided in such places. It was a sorrowful sight, ma'am—a sorrowful sight; the wretched craytures on the stage laughing at their own songs, and the people not laughing at all, but given over to tobacco smoking, and whisky, and talking amongst themselves. No glint of humour—stupid, senseless stuff. But there was one young man sung a song that had a better sound in it—I cannot remember the words—but I sometimes think there was common sense in them: it was about minding your own business, and doing your own work, and letting fools say or think of ye what they please. Aye, I think there was something in that young man; though I doubt, by the look of his eyes, but he was a drinker."

He turned to Mary Avon, who had been content to be a mute and unobserved listener.

"Well, Miss Mary," said he, brightly, "and the headache is going? And are ye looking forward to getting letters and newspapers when we get back to the world? There is a post office at that village of Clachan, John?"

Digitized by Google

"Oh, aye, sir!" said John; "there will be a post office."

The Laird looked up at him reproachfully.

"But why cannot ye learn the English pronunciation, man? What's the necessity for ye to say *posht offus?* Cannot ye pronounce the plain English—*post oaffice?*"

"I am not very good at the English, sir," said Captain John, with a grin.

"Ye'll never learn younger."

Then he went to Mary Avon, and suggested that a walk up and down the deck might do her headache good; and when she rose he put her hand on his arm.

"Now, said he," as they started off, "I do not like headaches in young people; they are not natural. And ye may think I am very inqueesitive; but it is the privilege of old men to be talkative and inqueesitive—and I am going to ask you a question."

There was certainly no effort at keeping a secret on the part of the Laird; every one might have heard these two talking as they quietly walked up and down.

"I am going to ask ye, plump and plain, if ye are not anxious about going to London, and worrying yourself about the selling of your pictures? There now; answer me that."

"Not very much, sir," she says, in a low voice.

"Listen to me," he said, speaking in a remarkably emphatic way. "If that is on your mind, dismiss it. I tell you what: I will undertake, on my own responsibeelity, that every painting in oil, and every sketch in oil, and every water-colour drawing, and every sketch in water-colour that ye have on board this yacht, will be sold within one fortnight of your leaving the yacht. Do ye understand that?"

"You are very kind, sir."

"I am not bletherin'," said he; "no man ever knew me draw back from my word. So put that anxiety away from your mind altogether, and let us have no more troubles. I could sell—I could sell four times as many for ye in a fortnight! Bless ye, lassie, ye do not know the people in the West of Scotland yet—ye'll know them better by-and-by. If there's one thing they understand better than another it is a good picture; and they are ready to put their hand in their pocket. Oh! they Edinburgh bodies are very fine creetics—they have what they believe to be an elegant society in Edinburgh—and they talk a great deal about pictures; but do they put their hand in their pocket? Ask Tom Galbraith. Ask him where he gets three-fourths of his income.
in Edinburgh; but he gets his income from the West of Scotland. Tom's a wise lad. He knows how to feather his nest. And when he has become independent of the picture-dealers, then he'll go to London, and fight the men there on their own ground."

"I should like to see some of Mr. Galbraith's work," she said, "before I return to England."

Digitized by Google

"You will have plenty of leisure to look at them by-and-by," replied the Laird, quite simply. "I have some of Tom's very best things at Denny-mains."

It was not until the cool of the afternoon that a light breeze sprung up to fill the sails of the *White Dove*, and press her gently on towards the coast of Cantyre. By this time every one on board knew that Angus Sutherland was leaving, and leaving for good.

"I hope ye will come and see me at Denny-mains, Dr. Sutherland," said the Laird, good-naturedly, "when ye happen to be in Scotland. I have a neighbour there ye would be glad to meet—a man who could talk to ye on your own subjects—Mr. Stoney."

Our Doctor paid but little heed. He was silent, and distraught. His eyes had an absent and heavy look in them.

"A most distinguished man," the Laird continued. "I am told his reputation in England is just as great as it is in this country. A very distinguished man indeed. He read a paper before the British Association not many years ago."

"About what, do you remember?" said the other, at last.

"H'm!" said the Laird, apparently puzzling his memory. "Ye see, a man in my poseetion has so much to do with the practical business of life, that perhaps he does not pay just attention to the speculations of others. But Mr. Stoney is a remarkable man; I am astonished ye should have forgotten what the paper was about. A most able man, and a fine, logical mind; it is just beautiful to hear him point out the close fitness between the charges in the major proposeetion in the Semple case, and the averments and extracts in the minor. Ye would be greatly delighted and instructed by him, Doctor. And there's another thing."

Here the Laird looked slyly at Mary Avon.

"There's a young leddy here who has a secret of mine; and I'm thinking she has not said much about it. But I will make a public confession now: it has been on my mind for some time back that I might buy a screw yacht."

The Laird looked triumphantly around; he had forgotten that it was a very open secret.

"And wouldn't it be a strange thing if this very party, just as we are sitting now, were to be up at this very spot next year, on board that yacht?—wouldn't that be a strange thing?"

"It would be a jolly pleasant thing," said the Youth.

"You are very kind to include me in the invitation," said Angus Sutherland; "but I doubt whether I shall ever be in Scotland again. My father is a very old man now; that is the only thing that would call me north. But I think I could get on better with my own work by going abroad for some years—to Naples, probably. I have to go to Italy before long, anyway."

He spoke in a matter-of-fact way; we did not doubt that he might pursue his researches better in Naples.

Digitized by Google

It was in the dusk of the evening that we slowly sailed into West Loch Tarbert—past a series of rocks and islands on which, as we were given to understand, seals were more abundant than limpets. But whereas the last haunt of the seals we had visited had introduced us to a solitary and desolate loch, with sterile shores and lonely ruins, this loch, so far as we could see, was a cheerful and inhabited place, with one or two houses shining palely white amid the dark woods. And when we had come to anchor, and sent ashore, although there were no provisions to be got, the men returned with all the necessary information for Angus Sutherland. By getting up very early next morning, and walking a certain distance, he would catch a certain coach, which would take him on to Tarbert on Loch Fyne in time to catch the steamer.

And so that night, before we turned in to our respective cabins, the Doctor bade us all formally good-bye; and Mary Avon among the rest. No one could have noticed the least difference in his manner.

But in the middle of the night, in the ladies' cabin, a sound of stifled sobbing. And the other woman goes over to the berth of her companion, and bends her head down, and whispers—

"Mary, why are you crying? Tell me!"

She cannot speak for a time; her whole frame is shaken with the bitter sobs. And then she says, in a low, trembling, broken voice—

"He has not forgiven me. I saw it in his face."

From the Cradle.

They tell me I was born a long
Three months ago,
But whether they are right or wrong
I hardly know.
I sleep, I smile, I cannot crawl,
But I can cry—
At present I am rather small—
A babe am I.

The changing lights of sun and shade
Are baby toys;
The flowers and birds are not afraid
Of baby-boys.
Some day I'll wish that I could be
A bird and fly;
At present I can't wish—you see
A babe am I.

FREDERICK LOCKER.

Digitized by Google

Klopstock.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, presages were not wanting in Germany of a coming literary revival. People acquired a sufficient interest in poetry to lose their tempers about it; they discussed it with zeal if not with knowledge; the rival leaders, Bodmer and Gottsched, had each a keen scent for the faults of the other, if not for his own. But the direct results of all this controversy were very meagre. Neither party as yet had a genius in its ranks. The verses produced were commonplace prose chopped into defective metre, from which all the essential elements of poetry were carefully excluded.

The German writers of the time failed in three respects. They wanted (1) the sense of form, (2) independence and national character, and (3) all contact with life. No doubt both Gottsched and Bodmer busied themselves with inquiries into language and style, but their methods were inadequate, and they were worshippers of false gods. Gottsched wrote in the French interest, but the French lightness of treatment and suggestive wit escaped him altogether, and the French wisdom of life which fulfils a Molière he never tried to acquire. In the same way Bodmer, who appealed to England, had not Shakspeare in his eye; and though he professed himself a disciple of Milton, it was only Milton's mistakes that he admired. The energy of plastic creation, the "planetary harmonies" of the English poet—for these he had no sense, and he placed him much on the same level with such respectable persons as Edward Young, author of the *Night Thoughts*. Thus the two rivals got little more from their study of foreign models than inflated blank verse and monotonous Alexandrines. And they looked upon these measures as absolutely perfect: they applied them mechanically without understanding their principles; they did not know that the form of a work of art is prescribed from within by the spirit; that it is like the shape to which a flower grows, not like a mould into which metal is cast.

But perhaps a worse fault than having an imperfect ideal was having a foreign one. No doubt every nation, if it be wise, will learn from all its neighbours; no doubt it will absorb elements offered from without. That is a vastly different thing from accepting any foreign standard. We may import tea from China without importing its mandarins. But Bodmer and Gottsched thought differently. At war in all else, they agreed in this, that Germany could produce nothing of its own; that it must imitate the literature of more fortunate countries, and that such imitations would supply all native wants.

The reason for such preposterous opinions among men of talent lay

Digitized by Google

in the separation which existed between poetry and life. People had no idea that a man's writings were connected with his character. The statement of Goethe that his poems are his confessions—the words he attributes to Tasso—

> And if the human heart in silence break,
> Mine is the God-given strength to *tell* my sorrow,—

would have been applauded as amusing paradoxes. Bodmer professed enthusiasm for Milton; but when in later days Lessing repeated Milton's principle that to write a poem one must live a poem, that no one can sing what he has not felt, Bodmer made merry over this "monstrous idea." "No, no, friend Lessing," he exclaimed; "it is not the man, it is only the poet, who loves and revels and weeps in his verses." Of course these opinions could hold ground only while there was no one of poetical insight to contradict them. As soon as men of real feeling and genius arose, their first task would be to restore literature to paths more human, more German, and more artistic. The two writers who fulfilled this mission, though in very opposite ways, were Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock and Christoph Martin Wieland.

Already in Klopstock's life we see that he was peculiarly fitted for the work of reform. He was born in Quedlinburg in 1724, and like most German boys of his rank, grew up in an atmosphere of the strictest religion, but *un*like most of them, with plenty of active exercise and outdoor employment. Both influences were due to his father, a man of somewhat excited pietistic notions, who believed in spectres, presages, and the bodily presence of the devil, but who was also keenly alive to the importance of muscular Christianity.* The son was not behind in either direction. One of his biographers would have us recognise in the child the ancient Cheruscan hardiness described by Tacitus, and dwells with especial delight on a swimming adventure which he undertook in spite of his parents' commands. Sent to school at Pforta, the other side of his character began to disclose itself. He threw himself on the study of Greek, broke loose from the pedantry of his masters, and read Homer not as a grammatical exercise, but as the great epic of every nation and every age. The contrast of this with what in his own country were by courtesy called poems, filled him with burning shame. He vowed that if he lived he would wipe out the reproach of his fatherland; at night he could not sleep for thinking of his high career; and though his conscience accused him of worldly ambition, his heart beat high with hopes of immortality and fame. Among the rather puritanical circles in which he moved he came to be noted for a certain exuberance of life. He revelled in an excited feeling of friendship. Friendship, next to peace of conscience, was the supremest happiness of man. He was an enthusiast for field-sports. He drew up a code of laws for skating,

* There are many critics and biographers of Klopstock, but none of them excels Gervinus in his *Deutsche Dichtung*, who in this genial notice surpasses himself.

Digitized by Google

which he afterwards celebrated in an ode. Goethe too was proficient in these matters, but the eternal riding, swimming, and boating of Klopstock and his school soon became a very nuisance to the more judicious poet. When Klopstock visited Zürich Bodmer and all his pious friends were greatly shocked. They had expected a holy young prophet, and were prepared to shed tears with him over his religious poems. But the lion would not roar, or rather would not weep. He was in disgracefully high spirits, and deserted his tearful admirers to amuse the ladies of the company.

But like most men in whose character the emotional predominates, Klopstock could be as easily depressed as exalted. Some of his odes, inspired by a merely hypothetical lady, express the innermost languishing of love. In others, which, contrary to contemporary German usage, he addressed to a real lady, Fanny Schmidt, he is often hoarse with misery. With streaming eyes he entreats Bodmer to intercede for him, and Bodmer good-naturedly consents. He is jubilant at the welcome which in 1748 the first three books of his *Messiah* receive; but he is presently plunged in despair when he remembers that, tutor as he is, he cannot devote his whole soul to the undertaking. This grief was removed. Bernstorff, Prime Minister of Denmark, invited him with a pension to Copenhagen. Klopstock set out in his most expansive mood, and during the journey fell in love with Meta, or Margaretha Moller, whom he celebrated under the name of Cidli in several fine odes, and who three years later became his wife. This is the lady, who with no introduction but her admiration, struck up a corrrespondence with Richardson the novelist, and who, with her pleasant broken English, her talk of a "manly (*i.e.* male) Clarissa," and of "war, the great fiend of friendship," was at one time pretty generally known in this country. In these and other letters she appears to the full as gushing, as lachrymose, and, we may add, as high-souled as either Richardson or her husband. She returns to the days "when," to quote her own words, "I was only the single young girl." She writes of her first meeting with Klopstock: "I must confess that, though greatly prepossessed of his qualities, I never thought him the amiable youth whom I found him. This made its effect." For though merely his friend to begin with, "at the least," she proceeds, "my thoughts were ever with him filled." It is perhaps cruel to make her furnish evidence that Klopstock was a sentimentalist and a bore, but after all the statement is now in print, and she gives it with an enthusiasm too innocent to pass by. On the anniversary of her marriage she writes to a friend, "Klopstock greeted me 'Wife of my heart, best wife, rare Meta, thou angel, thou, my heart and soul.' Yes, he said all that and much more, and ah! he has *been saying it already the whole year through.*" Which certainly is exactly what we would expect of Klopstock, but few would add with his victim, "How happy I am."

After his marriage Klopstock resided in Hamburg, where he lived a quite poetical life, idolised by his friends, his wife, and even by his wife's

Digitized by Google

family. The *Messiah* was his dream by night and his work by day, and whilst he wrote his wife prayed that he might have inspiration. Klopstock can describe the existence he now led only by the most superlative of superlatives. But it was soon to pass. After four years his wife died; his progress with his work was slow, twenty-five years elapsing between the publication of the first book and the last, and during the interval the German public gradually cooled in its enthusiasm till it grew quite severe. Klopstock consoled himself for these misfortunes as best he might. He tried his success in what he called *bardiettes*, imitations of what he fancied the poems of the bards must have been, and becoming the leader of the Patriotic School, formed a "society of bards," which met on Saturday afternoons. He also founded a Ladies' Poetical Club in Hamburg—of which Lessing's wife wrote, "I shall never be admitted, I am neither young nor pretty enough for Herr Klopstock"—and by-and-by he married again, this time a widow lady named *Winthem*. For the defection of the public he comforted himself with the admiration of aristocratic friends, who granted him pensions and paid him almost divine honours. "After the mother of the Messiah himself," writes one, "comes the mother of Klopstock." He lived to welcome, and then to denounce the French Revolution, both in unmeasured terms, and died in 1803.

From Klopstock's biography it seems pretty evident that his gifts are chiefly lyric. There is no trace with him of the measured, stately self-control that we associate with great epic poets, with Virgil and Dante and Milton. And still less does he possess that quick, wide sympathy with all types of character, all shades of opinion which the dramatist requires. He once pronounced it sin to love a freethinker. But his continual enthusiasm, his raptures of despair and delight, would all find their vent in the intenser kinds of lyrical composition.

It is noteworthy that Horace and Pindar were his early favourites and inspired his first poetical attempts. With them he cultivated his sense of form. As soon as he tried odes in German he found that he must have a perfect control over his language, a thorough insight into its spirit, a complete mastery of its materials. He studied it in the light of his Greek and Roman masters; he plunged into it and it bore him up; he felt he could compete with the ancients in their own measures, and contemptuously rejected what he called "the modern click-clack of rhyme." He strove with might and main to reach the old classical perfection of form, and not without success. "Klopstock," says Kolbe, "might boast as Augustus boasted of Rome, '*I found the German language brick, and left it marble.*'" It is unfortunate, but it is characteristic of the man, that this formal perfection means nothing more to him than mastery in speech, metres, and the arrangement of sounds. But in these he almost always succeeds, at least where they are the vehicle of exalted feeling. No doubt he takes liberties in his treatment of German, he forces it to be sublime, in spite of itself; what it gains in majesty, it loses in simplicity. A friend once told him that people did not under-

Digitized by Google

stand his language: "Then they may learn it," was Klopstock's reply. In this he was too proud and uncompromising, he would not take a telling. He persevered in classical constructions, involved sentences, obscure allusions, which it requires some erudition to explain. To illustrate this it is usual to quote his verse—

The pious monk's invention now resounds.

Perhaps few readers guess at once that he means *the gun is fired*, and that "the pious monk's invention" is the powder. A smart but somewhat flippant critic greatly annoyed Klopstock by proposing to translate his odes into *German*. Often he seems to have constructed his periods like Chinese puzzles, that his reader may have the pleasure of taking them to pieces again. But, after condemning all these faults, we must remember that they are by no means universal with Klopstock, and that it is very easy to make too much of them. Take him at his best and he is the unsurpassed ode-writer of the modern world (perhaps Dryden equals him in his one great effort). "Hence it comes that he has the ease and confidence of a master in all the primitive and original kinds of poetry. He seizes in its very essence the stormy ecstasy of the bards, the religious majesty of Psalms, and once or twice the more human beauty of the Greek lyrics." It has been said that in his youthful odes we hear again Pindar and David and the Edda. These names suggest a rough threefold division, not only of those, but of all his poems, according to three principles, which exercised a powerful influence on his life and development. Some of the odes are simple and severe, and have a faint breath of Greek beauty. Others are abrupt, difficult, involved and obscure, composed after Northern models and intended to express the *Urdeutsch*, the original native German. A third class are dithyrambic hymns of religious content, steeped in the spirit of David and Isaiah and St. John.

The Grecian inspiration, as we saw, was his first. In the classical world he learned the significance of form: Pindar and Horace taught him their measures and their style. All his odes may be considered as the direct or indirect outcome of these influences. "But in that alien pagan world as it was to him he could not long linger. Already when he left school he pitied Homer and Virgil for their religion's sake, and refused to follow in their steps." He placed the bard above the poet, the telyn above the lyre. "My heart," he cries, "demands tumult and storm and lofty flight, the audacious pictures of Northern song, countless, hot, and true." Thus we see him return from Greece to his own country, he is fired with the idea of independence; he will be a national poet and sing German strains; the scholar is merged in the patriot. This change it is not hard to explain. No man of sufficient poetical feeling really to appreciate the Greeks could fail to see that they were great by the inspiration of the life around them. The pulse of their people beat more quickly in their veins and the aspirations of their people shone more

Digitized by Google

brightly before their eyes. Will one reproduce Greek art, the sure way to fail is to imitate it: the only chance of success lies in making oneself the mouthpiece of one's own country and one's own time. This the young German felt. He began to search for a native hero and a native theme. He sought to revive the primitive German virtues. He wished to make his countrymen free and simple and hardy once more. This explains his passion for field-sports. "Had he been converting the heathen he could not have preached skating with greater unction." When Macpherson's *Ossian* appeared, Klopstock was in ecstasies. To call it a forgery was, in his eyes, blasphemous. Here was a poem original to the western races, "which defied Homer and shamed Apollo." Besides, in those days the distinction was not very precisely drawn between Celt and Teuton, and Klopstock was disposed to claim Ossian as the champion of all northern Europe. "Ossian was a Caledonian," says Gleim; "and therefore of German origin;" and Klopstock talks of his "Celtic or ancestral mythology." At a later day, when he composed his cumbrous allegory of the *German Republic of Letters*, he described it as a sort of society of Druids. In like manner, considering the bards common to both races, he wrote strange hybrid poems, which he called *bardiettes*, and which celebrate the feats of Arminius or Hermann, who had routed the legions of Rome. I may quote the following fragment to illustrate generally his treatment of these patriotic themes. The dialogue is between Hermann and his wife Thusnelda, when he returns from a victorious battle. The original antique metres are preserved in the translation:—

Lō! wĭth swēăt ŏn hĭs brōw, wĭth Rōman gōre staĭned,
Wĭth thĕ dūst ŏf thĕ bāttlĕ dĕcked hĕ cōmĕth,
Nē'ĕr wăs Hĕrmănn sŏ lōvĕly,
Thūs nĕvĕr flāshed hĭs brĭght eye.
Come! I tremble for joy; give me the eagles
And thy sabre blood-reeking, come, breathe freely!
Rest within my embraces
After the terrible fight.
Rest, that I from thy brow may wipe the sweat-drop,
And the blood from thy cheek, thy cheek how glowing!
Hermann! Hermann! Thusnelda
Never hath loved thee as now.
Not even when in the forests' shades so wildly
Thou with sun-embrowned arm didst seize me, stopping
I already beheld thee
With immortality crowned.
"Wherefore twin'st thou my locks? Lies not our father
Silent, dead at our feet? Oh had Augustus
Led his hosts to the battle
Gorier *he* would lie there."
Let me bind up thy waving hair, O Hermann,
That it may o'er thy wreath in ringlets threaten!
Siegmar dwelleth in Heaven,
Follow and weep not for him.

Digitized by Google

But it was not Hermann who first suggested himself as the great epical hero of Germany. Klopstock's earliest choice was the Saxon Emperor, Henry the Fowler, who had delivered his country from the Hungarian invaders. A little unrhymed ballad on this subject remains, which is a good specimen of Klopstock's simpler style :—

Behold the foe! the fight begins,
  Come on to Victory!
  The bravest hero leads us on
  In all our fatherland.
The sickness feels he not to-day,
  There bear they him along,
  Hail Henry, Hero brave and good
  In fields of flashing steel!
His eyeball glows with honour's flame
  And victory commands,
  Around him are the nobles' helms
  With hostile blood bedewed.

. . . . .

Oh welcome death for fatherland,
  Whene'er our sinking head
  With blood be decked, then will we die
  With fame for fatherland.
When we before us see a plain,
  And but the dead behold
  Around us, conquer then will we
  With fame for fatherland.

. . . . .

The fame we've won shall aye remain,
  Yea, even when we are dead,
  When we have for our fatherland
  The death of honour died.

But though Klopstock at one time thought of Henry for his hero, he soon abandoned him. We instinctively think of Milton, who once, from a crowd of epical and dramatic studies, selected the history of Arthur for his life-work. But finally both poets followed the summons of the sacred muse, and probably they were right. In the ode *To my Fatherland*, Klopstock exclaims :—

Thine was I from my boyhood when my breast
  Felt the first pulses of ambition spring.
I chose from heroes of the lance and crest
  Henry thy rescuer to sing.
But I beheld the higher track of light,
  And more than mere ambition fired my mind;
The pathway I preferred that leads from night
  Up *to the Fatherland of all mankind.*
That I pursue, but when the toil too much
  O'erburdens this mortality,
I turn aside, and, to the telyn's touch,
  Sing, Fatherland, thy fame to thee.

"In this way," laments Gervinus, "he sacrificed Homer for Ossian

Digitized by Google

and both for David." But this was really the best, indeed, the only thing he could do. How could he have sung a German heroic when Germany at the time did not exist? The disastrous Peace of Westphalia had made any practical patriotism impossible. The little princelings had received sovereign powers which made them independent of their Emperor on the one hand, and of their subjects on the other. Neither unity nor freedom existed; there was no German empire and no German people. Klopstock might feel that patriotic sentiment that burns itself out in an ode; but the love of country which is necessary to inspire a great effort, which springs from love and gratitude and complete self-surrender, how could he feel that for a land "where the subjects were lackeys and the sovereigns were brutes?" For the monarch who laid the foundations of a new Germany, for Frederick the Great of Prussia, Klopstock on religious grounds had no sympathy; and indeed in his odes, though not in his life, all kings indiscriminately were "sots, albinoes, and ourang-outangs." In these circumstances what catholic interest remained on which he could feel strongly save the interest of religion? Discontented with his own fatherland he turned to the "Fatherland of all mankind." "I searched for a hero," he says, "and sank exhausted. Then suddenly him, whom as a Christian I loved, as a poet I saw with one swift triumphant glance." Whatever faults there may be in the choice of subject and in the execution, we have here at least the first essential condition fulfilled, *the poet feels what he is writing about.* He will pour his life into this chalice, he will consecrate all his powers to this task. The fruit of his classical studies, the noble hexameters which few could wield as he, his exuberant and headlong diction, the inheritance from his Northern ancestry, these, he says, "I will now hallow by dedicating them to religion." He strove and struggled with himself to delay beginning his work till he was thirty years of age. But his subject possessed and overwhelmed him. It carried him away; he could not resist it, he *had* to begin. Feeling begets feeling: a poem which issued from such a state of mind must succeed: the first three cantos of the *Messiah* awoke an enthusiasm equal to the author's own. No doubt a reaction followed on both sides. Klopstock alternated between exaltation and ague, fever and depression. The public turned away from a work which at each further stage looked less and less like an epic. But meanwhile the deed had been done, the stimulus given. Henceforth there could be no question that the Germans had in them poetry of their own. They could now advance to their new classical period. They could never return to the "masterpieces" which had disgraced the last two hundred years.

In his choice of a subject we must admit that Klopstock was wrong. When a poet treats a larger theme he is generally exposed to a twofold danger. On the one hand his tastes may be a little recondite, he may select what is neither well known nor popular. In this case he will fail to excite catholic sympathy, his work will not be national nor ever

Digitized by Google

become household property. Or, again, he may choose what is too familiar, what is already sacred and hallowed in the minds of the people, so that no further artistic development is possible, and all change is regarded with suspicion. No one out of France is rash enough to write a new *Hamlet*, and Klopstock was guilty of almost as much foolhardiness when he undertook to work up the simple stories of the Gospel into an elaborate epic poem.

And the very conditions which determined his choice made it impossible for him fully to succeed. It was his orthodoxy dashed with pietism that drew him to the subject. Now while his pietism filled him with devout brooding reverence for the figure of Christ, his orthodoxy forced him to view it only through the old dogmas. These prescribed a certain treatment and forbade a certain treatment. He could not piece together, reject, remodel, and humanise. We have seen this done in the prose of Renan and others with at least far more artistic results than came within the range of Klopstock's verse. Even the Evangelical theologian, Dr. Dorner, says of him, "He failed to perceive that the divine, save when human, remains unrevealed, and hovers in a sublime haziness, which may inspire aspiration and ecstasy, but never keen plastic contemplation." Klopstock conceives the divine in what Dr. Dorner would call its unrevealed state. He seeks its expression not in the workings of man's spirit, but in signs and wonders. So, instead of bringing his theme more fully and clearly within our consciousness, he shifts it further away. To this result his artistic concurred with his religious orthodoxy. He held the baleful tenet that an epic poem demands supernatural machinery. All of it, therefore, which he found ready to his hand seemed to require enlargement rather than dismantling. So he introduces a multitude of marvels, a crowd of persons, an enormous dæmonic apparatus, of which the Evangelists know nothing, and which every judicious reader must feel to be out of place. Samma, a convert, Philo, a Pharisee, play important parts, and Pilate's wife, Portia, with her dreams and presentiments, has nearly a whole canto to herself. Nicodemus, Joseph, Lazarus, are made the heroes of imaginary occurrences. Indeed all the minor characters of the Gospel, who are introduced casually, whose names are hardly mentioned, or are left unmentioned, become the centre of detailed and fantastical romances. Perhaps the most ridiculous example is the little love story of Semida and Cidli, the young man of Nain and the daughter of Jairus. Since both died and both were raised from the dead, Klopstock discovers that they were evidently intended for each other. Their connection is not indeed mentioned in Holy Writ, but, thank heaven! Herr Klopstock is at hand to remedy such omissions! So he conducts them through a long and tearful courtship, and at length unites them amid a company of glorified saints and prophets who visit the earth after the Crucifixion. Most of Klopstock's admirers would think this blasphemy, did it not occur in a religious poem.

Perhaps even more superfluous are the hosts of angels, demons, and

Digitized by Google

genii who are intended to help on the action, but who really impede it. Nothing happens save through their agency. Herder condemns this with rather an amusing illustration. The Evangelist in his story of the Crucifixion says, "Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour." These simple words are intended to bring out the solemnity of the time, and do so completely. But in Klopstock, the seraph Uriel has been waiting for the proper moment, and then punctually signals to a star to place itself before the sun. In the same way no one can talk or think but it is by the prompting of an angel or a devil. "We get to know not men, but their guardian spirits." This fashion of supernatural poetry became the bane of Germany, and Lessing proposed to write a satire upon it in which old Gottsched should ride out "to hunt the seraphim." Klopstock only once attempts to portray character, and that is in the case of the fallen angel Abadonna. Abadonna was penitent, and his fate excited great interest in Germany. It became one of the burning questions of the day. The Zürich society supplicated for him, and in Magdeburg his salvation was solemnly decreed. This is not without parallel in England. Prayers have been offered that little Dombey might not die, and —what is even more à propos—that Lovelace's soul might be saved. In Germany these pious efforts were crowned with success, and at the end of the poem, when Abadonna beseeches God to annihilate him, he is mercifully restored to his place in heaven.

He alone of all the spirits has definite features. The others are a shadowy host, distinguishable only by their names. Schiller says truly, "From all that he touches Klopstock withdraws the body." And yet despite that, he is grossly materialistic. He places the infernal regions in the centre of the earth, lighted by a sun of their own. He describes God as a visible figure in space. He conceives spirit as body that has somehow ceased to be solid. Coleridge rather unkindly translates his name "Clubstick," and certainly he has no great subtlety of discernment or fineness of thought.

This defect shows itself in the whole plan of the poem, or rather in its absence of plan. When the early cantos appeared, and every one was raving about the new epic, Lessing cautioned the people that their applause was premature. "You can't judge a work of art from the parts," he said, "but only as a whole." This warning was disregarded at the time, but every new canto proved more and more conclusively that Lessing's fears had been well founded. What an epic imperatively demands is unity of action, but the *Messiah* had in the first place no unity, and in the second no action. Christ is nailed on the Cross at the beginning of the eighth book; angels, mortals, saints, and devils gather round, sing and declaim during his dying agonies; and at last he gives up the ghost at the end of the tenth book. Now, one would think the story must draw to a close, the catastrophe is passed, the goal is reached. But in ten other cantos, quite as long as the first ten, Klopstock, with choruses, colloquies,

Digitized by Google

and hymns, by a lavish use of celestial armies and the spirits of just men made perfect, fills up the interval between the Crucifixion and the Ascension. If this betrays a want of epical power, there is much else that absolutely contradicts the idea of a narrative poem. Instead of deeds, we have long debates: instead of acting, people talk. If before we were offended by Klopstock's interpolations, now we must marvel at his omissions. The procession to the Cross, the threefold denial of Peter, the end of Judas, should have been godsends to the poet: already there are touches about them hardly to be found out of our best old ballads. But Klopstock does not know when he is well off. We see the spectacle on the Cross; of the Via Dolorosa we hear no word. Peter's treason takes place in the background, and when all is over he comes forward and "weeps himself" (*ersteint sich*) the martyr's crown. At Judas' suicide, first the culprit makes a long speech, then his genius and a bad angel discourse together, and finally the departed spirit joins in the talk with a fatal fluency that death has not impaired. Not only does everybody speak, but their words are broken with passion: they foam at the mouth, or if they do not lose their self-control, it is because they are sublime. Everything is at the highest possible pitch. "For very feeling," says Lessing, "we feel nothing." Klopstock exasperates his reader with continual interjections; he had to be reminded, "Not every one that crieth Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of poetry." The same phrases occur in wearisome iteration. Everybody wonders and weeps and swooms and smiles and embraces everybody else, and dissolves in tears scalding or holy as the case may be. This last performance is especially Klopstockian. In almost every page one finds the expression "weeping eyes."

All these criticisms we must make if we take Klopstock at his word and regard the *Messiah* as an epic poem. But if we do this we are less than just. We shall gain a truer point of view if for a moment we contrast the *Messiah* and the *Paradise Lost*. We will not echo Coleridge's biting answer to those who called Klopstock a German Milton. "Yes, a very German one!" Rather we must decide that the two poets have as little as possible in common. With Milton everything has distinctness, firm outline, definite shape. Even his more hideous images have been compared by Winckelmann to beautifully painted gorgons. But no one in his senses would think of naming painting in the same breath with Klopstock. With him there is nothing fixed, nothing plastic; to use one of his own favourite formulas, "all things melt in feeling." Take even the following noble stanza on death:—

> Again to bloom the seed the sower sows,
> The Lord of Harvest goes
> Gathering the sheaves,
> Death's sickle reaps and leaves;
> Praise ye the Lord.

It is not too much to say that no pictorial thinker could have written

Digitized by Google

this, for it labours under a radical confusion; sowing and reaping, seed time and harvest, are both employed as types of death. It certainly is no picture, but does it not suggest another art? Take now this poem, which he calls the *Rose Wreath*:—

I found her by a shady rill,
  I bound her with a wreath of rose,
She felt it not, but slumbered still.
I looked on her, and on the spot
  My life with hers did blend and close.
I felt it, but I knew it not.
Some lisping broken words I spoke,
  And rustled light the wreath of rose,
Then from her slumber she awoke;
She looked on me and from that hour
  Her life with mine did blend and close,
And round us it was Eden's bower.

The presentiment, the dreaminess, the hush of feeling that mark these lines at least in the original, do they not come over the soul like a breath of melody? All poetry contains ideally the arts of painting and music. It is word-painting and word-music, though it is something more than their union. Klopstock's peculiarity lies in this, that with him the first element is more nearly wanting, and the second more fully present than with almost any other poet. One more quotation for the sake of one more comparison will serve to illustrate this. It is from his ode on skating:—

Sunk in the tomb on endless night
  Is many a great inventor's name;
Our torch we kindle at their light,
  But where is their reward and fame?

How name ye him who ocean crossed
  First with tall mast and swelling sheet?
Nor would I that his name were lost,
  Who added wings to flying feet:

For should not he immortal live
  Whose art can health and joy enhance,
Such as no mottled steed can give,
  Nor ever panteth in the dance? . . . .

The scene is filled with vapoury light,
  As when the winter morning's prime
Looks on the lake; above it night
  Scatters like stars the glittering rime.

How still and white is all around,
  How rings the track with new-sparred frost;
Far off the metal's cymbal sound
  Betrays thee for a moment lost.

Why to the isle dost list aloof,
  Unpractised skaters clamour there,

Digitized by Google

The ice not yet will load and hoof
  Above or net beneath it bear.

Ah, nought upon thine ear is lost,
  There wailings loud the death crash makes.
How different sounds it when the frost
  Runs splitting miles along the lakes.

Now contrast this with what Wordsworth says about skating in his poem on the "Influence of Natural Objects." I regret that I cannot quote it in full:—

So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din
Smitten the precipices rang aloud,
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

How precise and graphic and distinct all this is when compared with Klopstock's hazy rapture. And the opinions of the two men about Ossian point the same moral. His "want of firm outline," to which Wordsworth objects, is precisely what attracts Klopstock. For this, and Ossianic mastery of vague emotion and feeling for sound as sound, are all qualities of his own. Herder said that his odes must be read aloud; "then," he proceeds, "they rise from the page and become a dance of syllables." This is quite true, and Klopstock too often prefers the syllable to the word, the music to the meaning; he tickles our ears with pages of "sound and fury, signifying nothing." To such an extent does he proceed in the 20th canto of the *Messiah*, that his English translator * has not ventured to render it. It contains little more than shouts of Hosannah, choruses of Hallelujah, wavings of triumphal palms. Clearly the relation here is not with the painter, but with the musician. Gervinus reminds us that seven years before Klopstock began his poem, his countryman Händel had composed his famous Oratorio on the same subject, and with the same name. Klopstock, who loved music with his whole soul, had a peculiar affection for this piece, and regarded it as his own and his country's glory.

His own work is much liker an oratorio than an epic. It is one great ode, or rather a great collection of great odes. Klopstock is always

* Mrs. Collyer (or Mrs. Meeke). It may be remarked that Klopstock was unfortunate in the quality, though not in the quantity, of his translators; and his complaints about this formed one item in his famous conversation with Wordsworth and Coleridge. From what I have said it is clear that Klopstock must lose more than most men, even when well rendered; and if Herder could see the English versions he would call them "a prance of syllables." From these strictures, however, Mr. Nind must be emphatically exempted. All the rhymed translations which I have here used are by him, and their one fault is that they are rhymed. The unrhymed verse is by Mr. Baskerville.

Digitized by Google

a lyrical poet, and he is never more lyrical than in the *Messiah*. If we look at it in this light we shall like it better. Indeed, much that was repugnant to the idea of an epic we may now find to be powerful and impressive. We can now understand why the fragments were so popular while the whole failed to tell; for the parts must be read as lyrics. From this point of view some of the individual passages are in their way unsurpassed. Thus the description of Adramelech's flight is lofty and sustained. Ever on the watch, he seizes the moment when the Messiah is exhausted and agonised. He swoops like a vulture from his lonely rock, and flies through the desolate valley. For an instant he pauses above a suicide who lies weltering in his blood, and whose dying blasphemies re-echo from the surrounding hills. He reaches the prostrate figure of Christ and gloats over his prey: he will overwhelm Him with mockery and scorn. At this moment the Saviour turns and casts on him the look with which he will judge the world. Instantly the fiend shrinks and sinks in blank amazement. He sees no longer heaven, nor earth, nor Christ. Scarce can he rally for headlong flight.

Even the debates, if we regard them as splendid pieces of lyrical invective, may obtain their meed of approbation. The best of them is the dispute in the Sanhedrim, when the perturbation of Caiaphas, the caution of Gamaliel, the charity of Nicodemus, and especially the ruthless hatred of Philo, would make a really powerful impression, were their harangues not quite so lengthy.

Many, too, of the phrases and similes have a true poetic ring. When Satan *pours* the evil dream into Judas' open ear, does it not suggest old Hamlet's tale how his brother "into the porches of his ear did pour the leperous distilment?" And the whole episode of this dream is one of Klopstock's triumphs. Satan appears, as Judas' dead father, to excite in him treasonous thoughts. He tells him that his Master neglects and despises him. He shows him the future Messianic Empire in all its splendour. Where the mountains ribbed with gold cast long shadows on the fertile vales, there shall John the beloved disciple be king. Peter shall reign over hills where vineyards are hanging, and boundless fields of waving corn. All round, in a smiling land, cities glitter in the sun, each like Jerusalem, daughter of the king; a new Jordan flows beneath stately arches, along lofty walls, and gardens gay with fruit reach down to the golden sands—these are the kingdoms of the other disciples. But far in the north lies a bleak region wild and barren, and hideous with withered shrubs; above are drizzly clouds, below are snow and ice. "That, O Judas!" cries the fiend, "that is thine inheritance. There, companioned by birds of night, shalt thou wander alone among the aged oaks, while the other disciples smile in happy scorn."

It is in such passages as these, that afford scope for musical rhetoric, that Klopstock is at his best. It is a pity they are so scarce. They occur once or twice in the *Messiah*, in the dramas hardly ever. These last effusions are indeed hopelessly dull. I have already alluded to his

Digitized by Google

northern *bardiettes*. His sacred dramas are even poorer, and may be dismissed with a sentence: they are merely over-grown lyrics. The first and best of them, *Adam's Death*, deals with the mystery of death as it is first seen to approach, not at the beck of a murderer, but in the common course of things, and though monotonous, does not fail to impress. These dramas, however, are chiefly famous because of the evil fashion they introduced among the poetasters of Germany. For a few years every man who could versify, Wieland among them, and many who could not, seemed to study the genealogical chapters of Scripture for the purpose of weaving tragedies about the obscurest names. In the same way, the *Messiah* called forth a swarm of epics that were no more epical and far less lyrical than itself.

Klopstock's prevailing character then is vehement, high-strung enthusiasm. And it was well for reviving German literature that its first flight should be so bold and lofty. It soared at once beyond the "arrows, views, and shouts" of the profane Philistines. In his poem of the *Two Muses*, Klopstock proclaims at once that no cheap triumph will suffice him. The young untried Muse of Germany disdains contest save with her victorious sister of Britain. They prepare for the race—

> The herald sounds; they sped with eagle flight,
> Behind them into clouds the dust was tossed:
> I looked; but when the oaks were passed, my sight
> In dimness of the dust was lost.

Whatever we may think of the contest, we must grant that Klopstock restored German art to life and liberty. He himself revelled in this strange freedom, and abandoned himself to the guidance of his feelings. Probably this was necessary for the reformation of poetry, but it had its dangers. Klopstock's warmth of emotional raptures was wholly religious, but there were not wanting prophets of woe who foretold its issue in something very different. And they were right. It is proverbial that extremes meet. The excess of pietism swings round into an excess of frivolity. Both are the outcome of feeling and sensibility rather than of character, both look more to personal enjoyment than to a practical end. Klopstock himself was preserved from this transition by his priest-like purity and narrowness. But the logic of history made it necessary, nor is it to be considered merely a relapse. His overcharged religion and stilted diction need their supplement in an elegant style, and a gay graceful wisdom of the world. So in the fulness of days the spirit of Klopstock, who has been called the German Milton, moved and fulfilled itself, and assumed a new form in Wieland, who has been called the German Voltaire.

M. W. M. C.

Digitized by Google

Plea for Musicians.

I HAVE before me an impression of Hogarth's "Grub Street." How well the woes of the poor author are told! A sense of aspiration disappointed pervades the apartment. The milk-woman clamours for money, the baby wails for milk, in vain; the cat and kitten, trespassing in search of warmth on their master's coat, will shortly be turned off with ignominy; the dog, who is making free with the scanty viands reserved for a future meal, will be discovered; and so on, down to the poor poet, who,

> Sinking from thought to thought, a vast profound,
> Plung'd for his sense, but found no bottom there,
> Then writ and floundered on in mere despair.

Such were, such are, the woes of undiscovered authorship; and the world sympathises. But there is another class of composer, whose ranks are crowded with indigent members similarly endeavouring to subsist on a barren imagination—I allude to musicians. No Hogarth has delineated their griefs; it has been reserved, I believe, for melodramatists of recent years in rambles after fresh subjects to paint mixed pictures of their absurdities and sufferings. The world has no sympathy with them, and what is the reason of her insensibility? Is she not grateful to them for the many hours of happiness they have afforded her? How could she give her evening parties without Signor Rimbombo and Herr von Strom, whose joint efforts create a satisfactory emulation amongst the voices of the conversationists?

The world has no gratitude; no memory for ought but disagreeables. And yet I know not why one should speak of her so hardly, making her, as it were, the scapegoat of individuals—so meek and unrevengeful as she is too. I suppose the cause is cowardice; a collective hatred, too, has all the relish without the bitter after-taste of a personal animosity. But to continue. The world hates all musicians because they make a noise. She classes them with German bands, barrel-organs, paper-boys, old-clothes-men, the irrepressible sparrow, the matutinal quack of the park-haunting duck and the town-bred chanticleer, who, by crowing throughout the night, forfeits his only claim to respect. Musicians violate the peace of the domestic hearth; their art is an obtrusive one. The poet who recites his verses and tears his hair is not, though his ravings equal those of the Cumæan Sibyl, as a rule, audible through that razor-like partition which, as in Swedenborg's other world, separates many a heaven and hell; but the abortive efforts of the tyro-musician

Digitized by Google

cannot be restrained by the thickest and hardest of walls. Shut the window and door, the detestable flat notes drift down the chimney with perplexing perseverance. Do what you will, short of stopping your ears with wax, you cannot escape those unsirenish sounds. The only resource left to you is to fly to your piano—I don't ask if you have one—has a prize-fighter fists? did Fitzgerald possess a pair of pistols?—to fly to your piano and revenge yourself on your unoffending neighbour on the other side. Thus the musician is not only the direct means of destroying other people's comfort, but is indirectly the author of multitudinous evils, and consequently an object of universal execration. Would not the composer of *Home, Sweet Home*, whoever he may be, turn in his grave if he knew that his innocent composition was daily torturing the most Christian souls into mingled thoughts of hatred and revenge. The Persians have doubtless lived to curse that king who, in mistaken kindness, when he saw his subjects dancing without music, introduced 12,000 musicians and singers from abroad.

Yet no one will say roundly that he hates music. "Are you fond of music?" you ask your partner in the mazy waltz. "Very," she replies with a look of rapture; "but," she adds, "I don't care for Mozart, Händel, Beethoven," &c. One of England's wisest men is devoted to music, but *dislikes all compositions in the minor.*

Music is like the quack panacea for all ailments, to which, if it be successful, each attributes a particular virtue. "Ah! it may not be of any use in cases of pericarditis or acute mania, but it has often saved me from a fit of gout. Jim, you know, takes it for the hiccough." Music is the good fairy of our childhood, in whose basket is something good for every good boy. *Il Barbiere* for me; the *Eroica* symphony for you. It is not her fault that we little boys will quarrel as to which gift is the best, and abuse the donor.

The many-sidedness of music makes her many enemies. That which pleases everybody delights nobody; and music, like everything else, has points that invite criticism. London walls are not built to withstand the battery of sound with which they are so often assailed. Hence the surly attitude of the householder, enhanced, no doubt, by British idiosyncrasies. "An Englishman's house is his castle" is a favourite English proverb, a typical "John-Bull-itude." The blessings of privacy are little understood in southern climates, where the necessity of a house as a shelter from the elements is not so imperative. A well-known artist, travelling in the south of Italy, had occasion to make lively protestation against an ancient sow for a bedfellow, and he subsequently heard the natives exclaiming among themselves, "Son matti! son matti! tutti gli Inglesi son matti." We Englishmen resent the slightest circumstance which forces us to acknowledge ourselves as part of the community; and there is no more forcible reminder, except perhaps a summons to serve on a grand jury, that such is our position, than the impertinent intrusion of the music of our neighbours. The faintest sound that penetrates the

Digitized by Google

sacred *paries* we regard as violating our national privilege. We harden our hearts against it. We blunt our æsthetic sensibilities. We have a stereotyped formula to express our opinion of all music so heard. It is execrable. I once had lodgings next door to a famous tenor. I thought he sang atrociously; and it was only when I found out who he was that I was obliged to recognise in him the artist who had so often entranced me at the opera. We are, in fact, like dogs—dogs in the manger—who howl at all music alike, good and bad. True it is we are not always so fortunate. True it is that the vicinity of the ambitious amateur is not to be coveted—nay, hardly to be borne.

> Music, when soft voices die,
> Vibrates in the memory.

But if those voices be *not* soft, and if those concords be discords, the vibrations of which the memory is sensible are more pronounced, more prolonged. We mark our disapprobation of the noise-loving qualities of Frenchmen by calling them "our lively neighbours," but if we apply these words to "the people next door" it is with a ghastly facetiousness that masks a world of concentrated spite and hoarded venom appalling in these days of civilisation. We are shocked at the immodesty that causes them to give publicity to their abortive efforts. We cannot understand their want of consideration for the feelings and comfort of others; we fail to imagine how they can derive enjoyment from such ill-assorted harmony (?); we are at a loss to comprehend why their common sense does not step in and put a check upon them. Our dilemma is excusable, and the horns of it are wide apart and grievously pointed.

My facetious friend T. H. says that every man, when he is under an arch, thinks he can sing; echo is the cause of many a self-admiration. Now there are people who are born, who spend their existences, under an arch—a moral arch, I mean. To them, if their bent be musical, crescendos and diminuendos are fantastic adornments, time an unnecessary restriction, semitones needless refinements. They thump, they bang, they bellow, they roar, they shout, they scream, they squeal. But to them the meanest, the most erratic, sound they make is better than heaven's sweetest music. It is trying to listen to the facile, well-connected amateur who dashes off a *pot-pourri* of the popular airs of the day. It is trying to detect the laboured efforts of the humble, untiring, untalented student, who is ever striving, ever failing, to attain the correct rendering of a well-known classical composition. But, reader, have you ever lived next door to a family of orthodox ladies who every afternoon sing a selection of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, artfully so contrived that there is at least one note in each tune half a tone beyond the compass of the performer's voice? Why is it—I submit it to you—why is it that all musicians, good as well as bad, are prouder of their extreme notes than of any other portion of their voice? Why should the bass be ever strug-

Digitized by Google

gling to perform feats natural to the tenor? why should the soprano be constantly endeavouring to commit larceny on the property of the contralto?

Is it because the result attained, though perchance unsatisfactory to others, is endeared to the performer by reason of the difficulty of the undertaking? Is this why these sorry sounds are prized as things of beauty, the more precious because they cannot last for ever? Perhaps! But I think a deeper moral truth is here involved.

Gentle friend, have you ever been stirred into consciousness in the early morning, when the fires are unlit, when the housemaid is in bed, when the winter snow is on the ground, and the east wind is howling unreasonable retribution—by the sounds of the piano? Has the citadel of your slumber ever been thus rudely assaulted by the scaling ladders of perversely laborious young ladies? If not, you have not known regret. Young ladies, I weep tears—no *crocodile* tears—over your *scales*.

Thou, wicked old creature, with thy sallow notes, thy withered legs, thy cracked voice, of what hours of misery, of what ghastly profanities, of what needless chilblains hast thou not been the cause? Picture me, reader, as I lie in bed, thus bereft of two hours of blissful forgetfulness. "The people next door"—that is to say, that portion of the people next door in whom I am so painfully interested, consist of five young ladies ranging from twelve years of age to twenty—"sweet and twenty," it is called—all immolating themselves on the altar of fashion, striving to be musical. They succeed each other, for to each is allotted a certain period of anteprandial martyrdom. As there are family characteristics in voice, in figure, in face, so are there in music. I have heard of a self-made man, who purchased a nobleman's castle in the north, and employed a skilled painter to construct him a gallery of ancestors, in which his plebeian bottled-nose was palpably deduced, through a hundred nicely modulated gradations, from the delicate aquiline that came over with the Conqueror. A similar study is now presented to me, not in noses, but in ears; here are five young ladies all playing in succession the first movement of the Moonlight Sonata, with a stress of varying degrees of diabolicity on the last note of each triplet. There is some interest in the subject, but it is soon exhausted. This species of torture is enhanced when the torturer is scientific. I was calling the other day on some friends who have the impudence to imagine that living in a flat is the secret of true comfort. I found them in the wildest despair. I asked "why?" They only answered, "Listen." I listened. Overhead was a piano. They told me it was *tenanted*—I say tenanted, because I fancy the piano was of more importance to its owner than the room in which it stood—it was tenanted by an operatic composer. He was rehearsing a storm. "Tee-tee-tee—tee-tee-tee—tee-tee-tee—rom! pom!" There was no mistake about its being a storm, and what a storm it was! If I thought the composer was in any way attempting to be faithful to nature I would not visit even Paris again. I have since come to the conclusion that he must have

Digitized by Google

studied meteorology, and in theory only. The hero was probably a meteorologist gone mad, that is, one who had over-meteorologised himself. An ideal or complete storm was visiting him in his dreams; a storm with fixtures; a storm with all possible accessories; a storm with frightful, unheard of, auxiliary occurrences. Such a storm in fact as would have effectually prevented Æneas from *eating his tables*—such a storm as Walt Whitman would delight to catalogue:—

I hear the so-ho of the sailors and the creaking of the chain that uplifts the anchor:
I hear the squelch of the billows on the gunwale:
I hear the cheery champing of hungry jaws at dinner:
I hear and rejoice;
For am not I part of them and they of me?

I hear in the morning at breakfast the champing of jaws diminish:
I hear the angry warnings of the rising gale:
I hear the mutterings of the animated ocean:
I hear and fear, for am not I part of them and they of me?

I appreciate the bravado of the captain:
I appreciate the sang-froid of the officers:
I appreciate the futile questionings of the anxious passengers.
For am not I part of them and they of me?

I fear the whirlwind, the whirlpool, the tornado, the simoom, and the scirocco·
I fear likewise the thunder and the lightning.
I fear the plagues of Egypt.
For am not I part of them and they of me?

I listen to the creaking of the straining cordage:
I listen to the orders of the captain amid the overbearing din of the tempest;
I listen to the clatter of the axes and the crashing fall of the mainmast:
I listen to the thud of the keel on the shingle:
I listen to the unbounded licence of the crew:
I listen to the screaming of the affrighted passengers:
I listen to the awful *ultimate* silence.
For is *that* not part of me and I of *that?*

So did we listen perforce, and we wished it had been. He pauses breathless. We congratulate ourselves that Providence has placed limits to human exertion even in moments of the wildest inspiration. Silence at last! But no! tee-tee-tee—tee-tee-tee—tee-tee-tee—rom! pom! Another storm is brewing. I bid my friends farewell and return home—I confess it—to speculate on the enormous advantages that would accrue to mankind if operas could dispense with composition. But was I right thus to give way to irritability? Let me calculate the comparative importance of my discomfort and my musical friend's unpleasant undertaking! Am I penning an epic that will eclipse *Paradise Lost?* Am I writing a history that will outdo Macaulay? Or rather, do I think I am? Then let me use all my endeavours to suppress my tuneful neighbour. I fear, however, that it is only when I am idle that I find time to grumble, or that there is aught to grumble at.

Digitized by Google

Most of us run in a groove and make ourselves very unpleasant if that groove is not well oiled for us; and thus it comes that the minor calamities of life constitute its real unhappiness, just as the little unexpected pleasures furnish the chief contribution to its happiness. After all, we are little better than children to whom the divine justice of nature has decreed that so many sugar-plums entail so much castor-oil. Therefore let us not repine if the permission to sleep in a warm, soft bed is qualified with a seasoning of adjacent discords.

We tolerate infancy, let us be charitable to infant musicians. We gloze over that period of our children's lives when their existence is a hideous nightmare—a constant alternation of famine and surfeit; when the wail of inanition follows hard upon the stertorous breathing of repletion, for the sake partly of the sudden random gleam of inner light that breaks from them, and reminds us of the great Anti-Darwin. But, to make prose of one of England's most beautiful poems, an admixture of the world's baser influence is necessary to utilise the divine essence of man. Experience teaches expression, though in that expression the subtler, ethereal quality of the mind becomes for the most part bewildered into commonplace. Divine wisdom must conform to the rules of grammar and the coarse sounds of current speech: so must the harmony of Apollo himself be thrust through the straitened mould of chromatic scales and made to thread the intricacies of counterpoint.

Therefore grumble not, O hardened unsympathetic Londoner, if thy morning slumbers be broken by the shriek of the fiddle, or the shrill pertinacity of the flute. You cannot, of course, bring yourself to believe that futile attempts to master a simple theme may be the untutored stammering of a soul bursting with music, whose lot perhaps in some future day, in some future world, will be to entrance his thousands, even as Israfel holds spell-bound the denizens of Paradise with the music of his heart-strings. This, you say, is hard to believe; therefore let me put another picture before you!

The scene is a garret; it is a bitter winter's day; the wind howls around and enters through a hundred crevices; an ember or two smoulders on the hearth. At a rickety table, huddled up into the corner in a vain attempt to elude the network of draughts which intersect the apartment, sits, lost in his work, the young musician. He has just completed the score of his symphony; it is his first. Smaller works he has done, and has tried in vain to get them performed; but this is that work which will make him famous for centuries to come. Perhaps it is the last thing he will ever do. Pinched by famine, benumbed with cold, he has, sown in his veins, the seeds of a fatal disease. He has just finished his score, which he regards with admiration. He has no doubts of its success. He turns to the beginning, hums the theme, gets more and more excited, rises to his feet, and seizes the crutch on which he drags himself to the nearest eating-house when he has money for a meal. He fancies himself in the National Concert Hall. Thousands of eager

Digitized by Google

spectators throng that vast auditorium behind him. He hears the hum of expectancy. He gives the signal. The muted violins whisper forth the air; the basses and the 'cellos give it body; it develops; the brass contributes a mellow fulness; a running wave-like accompaniment is heard from the harp; the whole body of instruments is now at work. "Crescendo!" The action of the young composer's arm becomes animated. The time is quickened. Faster! Faster! The movement is reaching a climax. "Forte! forte! più! più! fortissimo!" There peals forth a tremendous unison. But no! poor soul, there is no answer to his call but the trembling of the crazy boards on which he sways his feeble frame. There are no thousands in whose hearts he can raise a kindred glow of emotion. That symphony, too, like his other works, will decay unknown in the closet. He sinks into his chair in a passion of weeping.

No doubt he is one of those whose efforts at composition, before he was forced to sell his piano, have educed many a muttered oath from his luckless neighbours. But he is a man of a great soul and a noble useful life.

You deny; you disbelieve. You deny the utility of a life that achieves nought but disappointment. Reader, the fame of many a contemporary is built on *such* disappointments—the disappointments of others. You disbelieve that the history I have sketched is possible in these days of enterprising managers, of universal good taste, of charity organisations. Reader, the world is a wide world, and there is many a dreary spot in it. You ask: "Why does he waste his time and his life in seeking after the unattainable?" You hate the pride that spurns what you call "a useful life." You would have him scrape the fiddle in a music-hall. You would wish him to dance attendance in the schoolrooms of the rich. But you forget that where nature bestows fine brains she seldom adds a broad back. You forget that the subtle imagination of the artist may be blighted in the tussle with mechanical routine and enforced inferiority. And yet you doubtless have friends whose existences have been embittered by the impossibility of exercising a fancied creative power, but to whom the necessity for bread has appeared paramount. Our poor friend did not so regard that necessity; and seeing the alternative, there is much to be said for his way of thinking. I beg pardon, I have unwittingly become serious.

Hogarth, I said, had not represented the woes of musicians—I meant the woes of unrecognised musical talent. His picture of the "Enraged Musician" portrays the outrage of musical sensibility. The ear that has, by long use, become accustomed only to sweet concordance, feels acutely the babel of that barbarous serenade. The sufferings of the "Enraged Musician" are our own intensified. It never, I confess, occurred to me till the other day that a musician who had thus suffered might mentally transfer his martyrdom to his neighbour, and thus become so struck with the brutalities he is committing as to desist altogether from music. This

Digitized by Google

possibility suggested itself to me while reading Mr. Schuyler's interesting book on Turkestan. There appears to exist among the Tartars a refinement of feeling not credited to European votaries of harmony. Mr. Schuyler will doubtless pardon me for not quoting the anecdote *verbatim*: as certain variations of language are necessary to elucidate the meaning which I attach to the fable.

Its hero was a local saint, Khorkhut by name, whose stature, fourteen feet, made him an object of some eminence in the country. He was fond of music and had a desire to learn to play upon the lute. Accordingly, being of a sensitive temperament himself, and knowing of what discomfort to others are the ill-harmonies evoked by the unskilled hand, he unselfishly withdrew to the edge of the world in order to complete his musical education. In this hope, however, he was disappointed. Visited one night by a dream, he thought he saw some men digging a grave. "For whom is that grave?" he asked. "For Khorkhut," they replied. He awoke, and the result of this short but plainly-pointed conversation was that he speedily removed his abiding-place. So hasty a determination, so evident a care for life, may strike the reader as inconsistent with that strength of character which marks every truly great man. A word about this hereafter. From the edge of the world Khorkhut now removes to its eastern corner. No rest, however, can this giant son of harmony find here. The same vision again assails him and with the same results. Now he pitches his tent on the western corner; now on the northern; now on the southern; but all in vain. At length it dawned upon him that his only resource was to try the centre of the world; and he consequently encamped upon the banks of the Syr-Daria, which, as every well-informed person knows, *is* the centre of the world. But alas! there too these hideous phantoms pursued him. "Must I," he cried in piteous lamentation, "must I then resign all hope of being able to discourse with thee, O lute, O mistress, in that sweet language which thou alone understandest? Ye Gods, if there be any pity in Heaven," he continued (unconsciously quoting Æneas's stock phrase), "have mercy on your hapless slave, who, after all, only wants to learn to play upon the lute." Then seeing the dark waters of the Syr-Daria rolling beneath, and despairing of pity, he cast his mantle on the stream and himself on the mantle. But, wonderful to relate, those murky waters did not engulf him. He floated, and there, in this unassailable position, he found peace at length. He played his lute; he played it for a hundred years; and *then* he died. The manner or the cause of his death has not been transmitted to us. It must ever remain a mystery whether his passion for the lute was the secret of his longevity; or whether, had he been no musician, and lived like other folk, he might not have attained to even a greater age. Perhaps the mere fact of having so completely his own way delayed the process of natural decay. But, be that as it may, the issue is foreign to our subject.

Digitized by Google

The question which now concerns us is why was Khorkhut sainted? In some rustic European calendars we find such undeserving saints as Pilate and his wife; but the Easterns have generally some sufficient reason for their canonisations. Of his pedigree we know nothing; we may conclude therefore that the dignity was not hereditary. Stature is a sign of distinction in the East, but it is an attribute of devils as well as heroes. Thus we may conjecture that his sainthood was conferred on him for some such reason as the following. He was a man who lived a long life with a distinct object in view, and, despite the difficulties thrown in his way, at last attained that object. These difficulties were aggravated—1, by the fact of his enormous stature which rendered his proceedings a matter of general notoriety; 2, because of his extremely sensitive nature, which did not allow him to interfere with the comfort of his fellows; for the nightmares, which haunted him, were nothing but the reproaches of his unselfish conscience. Once, however, in the midst of the desolate flood of the Syr-Daria, he knew that he was at length alone, and could learn how to unburden his music-laden soul without annoyance to any one. These are nice points of feeling to be commemorated by barbarian Tartars, say you. Timour was a Tartar; and the reasons he alleged for conquest were substantially the same as those now put forward by Christian Russia.

Music is a physical necessity for certain people. No one will be inclined to doubt this who has been at the university, and heard the simultaneous burst of melody which arises the very instant that the clock marks the hour when the authority of learning is placed in abeyance and music sways the alternating sceptre. Thus, without doubt, there are many of us whom delicacy of feeling prevents from seeking to express our thoughts in harmony, herded together, as we are, in the metropolis, and since, unlike Khorkhut, we cannot play nomad.

Half of us thrive on noise, and the other half cannot subsist without absolute quiet. What, then, can be done? Can we, like the reverse of a solution I once heard of the poor-rate difficulty in London, namely, to surround each rich man's house with a circle of squalid hovels—can we banish all pianos and such like inventions of the evil one to one quarter of London? Imagine, if you can, the difficulties of this! And if it were accomplished, imagine the rivalry that would spring up between the musical and the non-musical members of the community.* Our boasted London would then be little better than the Indian village of which Sir William Sleeman writes, where there are two Mahommedan parties, who celebrate their religion, one in silence, the other to the sound of the tom-tom. (N.B. I should think the quietists would ultimately adopt the rival mode of worship.)

* Victor Hugo evidently imagines that some such division of London was necessitated by the bitterness of party-feeling there, when he defines "le West-end" as "partie occidentale de Londres habitée par les Torys."

Digitized by Google

I know of no remedy for this state of affairs. To me the problem appears insoluble. But let us not sit with folded hands! There is a palliative which suggests itself to me—a medicine prescribed by the most famous physicians—a medicine easy of application, but difficult to meet with. It is *charity*.

Do I doctor myself with the medicine I prescribe to others? you ask; or am I a musician and thus plead the cause of my profession?

Between ourselves, dear reader, neither is the case. I certainly do not practise what I preach, but being capable of some sort of studied noise which the lenient might possibly recognise as music, I am thus in a position to exercise the "lex talionis," which I do rigidly,—"an eye for an eye," a headache for a headache. For further particulars inquire next door.

L. T.

Digitized by Google

A Pilgrimage to Vallauris.

MANY years ago I happened one afternoon to be strolling up the High Street in Oxford—*sicut meus est mos*—when my attention was attracted by a few earthenware vases and ornaments in the windows of Spiers's well-known fancy-shop, nearly opposite the twisted columns which support Archbishop Laud's rococo portal to St. Mary's. I had never before seen any other pottery exactly like them. They consisted of a plain glazed olive-green ware, of very simple but beautiful shapes, with no ugly knobs or excrescences, no tawdry painted figures, no meretricious addition of any sort which could distract the eye from the graceful curves of their swelling outline. Their forms were modelled upon classical patterns, reproduced with exquisite taste in a colour and material which completely harmonised with the original conception. I went in to ask the price. They were marvels of cheapness, as it seemed to me then. Those were the early days of the æsthetic revival, when we had not yet grown accustomed to have beautiful things brought within the reach of modest purses; and I hailed the new earthenware with joy and congratulation. Mr. Ruskin, Mr. Morris, and a hundred other teachers had long been preaching to us that what we wanted was not more pictures and more statues, but higher and better taste in simple everyday articles; and here was the very thing we had all been looking for in vain. The shopman told me the new ware came from "some place called Valery, in France," but nearer than that decidedly vague address he could not get. I thought at first they must be made at one of my two old Channel haunts, St. Valery-sur-Somme or St. Valery-en-Caux; but I soon learnt that they were really of Provençal workmanship, and that the place where they were manufactured was Vallauris, near the wilderness of modern villas which still bears its strangely inappropriate village name of Cannes. No matter what the new vases might be called, however, I was not long in making up my mind that they were genuinely beautiful and commendable works of art.

Of course I bought a small selection of the pretty vases, and introduced them eagerly to the acquaintance of all friends interested in æsthetic matters. Very soon the consignment was sold out, and new consignments came over to replace it. Oxford is a capital centre for propagandism, since the men take back new ideas with them to homes in every part of England; and perhaps the little stock of crockery in the window in High Street played its modest part in helping on the great artistic movement which has since declared itself so clearly amongst us. Naturally it did not do all the work, even as regarded Vallauris ware;

Digitized by Google

for when I went up to town, a few days later, I found that the same pottery had already broken out over all Bond Street, and had made its way into more than one household where I happened to call. Indeed, it seemed to have taken everybody's fancy as much as it had taken my own. Nevertheless, from that day to this, I have always felt a sort of proprietary interest in Vallauris ware, as though I had discovered and introduced it entirely on my own account, and I have never missed an opportunity of saying a good word on its behalf in speech or print. Accordingly, happening to find myself and my encumbrances, a short time since, in some lovely spring weather at Cannes, I held it a bounden duty to drive over one bright day and inspect the works at Vallauris. So many people have now learnt to admire the Vallauris pottery that they may perhaps be not wholly uninterested in learning something about the manner of our visit.

We started at ten o'clock, on a glorious Provençal February morning, from the new marble statue in the Square Brougham. Cannes has already performed the apotheosis of Lord Brougham, and I am convinced that only the unfortunate fact of his having been an Anglican in religion has prevented the population from making him into a saint outright. As it is they are obliged to content themselves with a Brougham statue, a Brougham bust, a Cours Brougham, and a Brougham portrait in every shop. Last year they gave a Brougham fête, while this year every passenger at the railway station is vociferously requested to invest a franc in a *Hymne à Lord Brougham*. And, indeed, Cannes has good reason to be satisfiod with her relations to the English Lord Chancellor; for his example has turned the town, from a mere fishing village with a lovely situation, into the brightest, prettiest, and most expensive of the Mediterranean winter resorts. Villas and gardens now line the shore in unbroken order for five miles together, where only forty years ago a few hundred fishermen dwelt in the tortuous and dirty lanes clustered on a lone hill-side about the little church and mouldering castle which once protected their remote ancestors from the frequent attacks of the Barbary pirates.

The drive to Vallauris is alone worth the trouble of a visit to Cannes, even if one had not the artistic treat of the potteries before one's eye as the end and goal of the day's excursion. Passing through the long and handsome street of shops which lines the Route d'Italie for the first two miles, we emerge at length upon the road to Nice, with its lovely ornamental grounds and quaint villas. The houses themselves, which stud the hill-side in every direction, are pretty, for the most part, rather in spite of than because of their architecture. Here a Russian prince has built himself a magnificent palace, a sort of southern Kremlin, bristling with domes, and pinnacles, and gilded minarets; there an English manufacturer has planted a modern Gothic castle, constructed of dark red porphyry blocks, with heavy square towers and machicolated battlements; a little farther a Parisian actress has retired to the rural

Digitized by Google

shades of a Swiss châlet in gilt gingerbread; and beyond again a wealthy French journalist has erected a huge Italian villa in that ornate and over-decorated style which I can only describe as the Haussmann order of architecture. This Haussmann order is the prime favourite with moneyed people all along the Riviera, and it can best be realised by remembering its chief example, the new Opera House in Paris. It crops up again in all the splendid but tasteless mansions which line the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, and it reappears once more, whiter, brighter, and more fantastic than ever, in the hotels at Cannes, the club houses at Nice, and the great gambling casino at Monte Carlo. On the Mediterranean shore, however, the style becomes almost pretty by the contrast between its pure white stone—Baron Haussmann boasted that, like Augustus at Rome, he found Paris of brick and left it, if not of marble, at least of freestone—and the exquisite blues and greens of the sea and foliage. Indeed, the whole effect of all the villas scattered about the hills of Cannes is singularly brilliant and beautiful. Many of them are in themselves extremely tasteful, and all of them are redeemed by the massive foliage, the clear blue southern sky, and, above all, the exquisite lawns and gardens by which they are surrounded. Slopes of smooth English greensward, dotted about with fan palms, date trees, and tropical plants, run down from the houses to the roadside, every gateway opening up to one's delighted eyes a fresh glimpse into some little earthly paradise of flower-beds and shrubberies. Close to the walls or railings, and hanging over within reach of the passing carriages, the slender drooping foliage and golden-tufted blossoms of the mimosa form, every here and there, thick glowing masses of exquisite bloom. One road at Cannes, a perfect mine of these golden tufts, bears the quaintly allusive name of California. No other tree, that I know of, stands out from top to bottom so unbroken a phalanx of serried gold. Even the long tresses of our own lovely laburnums must yield to the mimosa both in richness of colour and in wealth of blossom. Oranges hanging everywhere among the dark, glossy green foliage give a title to more than one Villa des Hespérides. Here and there, too, a wild spray of pinky-white flowering almond, standing out, twin-forked, in bold relief against the retiring blue-green background of the sky near the horizon, suggested forcibly to our minds, as we passed, the original hint from which Japanese keramic artists must have borrowed the first idea for some of their boldest and happiest designs.

Some way beyond the outskirts of the town, but still within the region of lawns, and orange groves, and suburban cottages, the road ascends a hill overlooking Golfe Jouan, and brings one full in view of the sea, the winding coast, and the great chain of the Maritime Alps. Away in the distance the jagged peaks of the snowy range stand out in virgin white against the deep blue of the cloudless sky. The snow lies thick upon their crests and low down their sides throughout the winter months, so that they rise like a single icy sierra above the green lower ridge of the nearest hills, which hide the limits of the snow line and so

Digitized by Google

immensely increase the beauty of the picture. In the foreground the land trends gracefully round in a hundred great arcs and undulations, first to the jutting promontory of Antibes, crowned by the ancient chapel of Notre Dame de Garoupe; then, with a wider sweep, to the white streets of Nice and the tall lighthouse of Villefranche; finally, beyond the great mountain barrier of the Turbia, along whose ledges the Corniche road winds its sinuous way towards Genoa, to the long and dim foreland on whose seaward extremity we can just descry the sunlit houses of Bordighera. To every curve of the coast answers a sister curve of glassy bay, "the peacock's neck in hue," dotted here and there with deep russet sails. As we gaze upon the alternating belts of lighter and darker blue which chase one another along the indentations of this fair Hellenic shore—for Nice and Antibes, Nicæa and Antipolis, are themselves the last outposts of that indomitably free Phocæan colony of Marseille, made familiar to us all by the glorious story in Herodotus—we cannot fail to recall the long lilt of Mr. Swinburne's lines concerning Aphrodite in the *Hymn to Proserpine*:

> And the wonderful waters knew her, the winds and the viewless ways,
> And the roses grew rosier, and bluer the sea-blue stream of the bays.

Surely, if we may judge by the zones of exquisite colour that fleck the liquid sapphire before us, the foot of Aphrodite herself must have lightly skimmed the "viewless way" that leads from the farthest Hellenic port of Massalia to that basking rock on the dim horizon where the "lone-dwelling Heracles" of the old Ionian merchantmen, the solitary tutelary god of a tiny isolated Hellas, surrounded by wild Ligurian mountaineers, has given his poetical name to the Portus Herculis Monœci, the little modern principality of sea-girt Monaco.

Looking backward towards Cannes and the Provençal coast, the view is scarcely less lovely than that towards the Genoese Riviera. Close at hand the little Iles de Lérins stretch before us, separated by a narrow strait from the low headland of La Croisette. On the nearer of the two islets which make up the tiny archipelago—the Ile Ste. Marguerite—that impenetrable mystery whom we call the Man with the Iron Mask dragged out seventeen years of his lifelong imprisonment. It was here, too, that Marshal Bazaine effected his little romance of modern life by escaping from the just fate which should overtake a traitor to his country in its darkest day. Yet I must confess, if I had to be imprisoned anywhere, I should much prefer the Ile Ste. Marguerite, with its huge, shield-like umbrella-pines and its glorious mountain views, to sharing the cells of Dartmoor or Portland with the "unfortunate nobleman" of our own island. The second of the little group, the Ile St. Honorat, contains the sadly desecrated ruins of an ancient monastery, utterly destroyed under pretence of restoration by a body of Vandals in a modern Cistercian dress, but still noteworthy as the school from which went forth a host of famous men in early Christian days—St. Lupus of Troyes, who

Digitized by Google

checked the onward swoop of Attila; Salvian, the preacher whose jeremiads have revealed to us the crumbling state of Gaul at the date when the great wave of Teutonic conquest swept over the provinces; and that now half-mythical name which vaguely clothes the genuine personality of a real missionary monk, St. Patrick of Ireland. On the farthest point we can just catch a glimpse of one massive square tower, crowned with heavy battlements, the *château fort* of the eleventh century, where the brethren took refuge in times of danger from the attacks of the Moorish pirates, or of those "belligerent Christians" whom they dreaded almost equally, the corsairs of the Genoese coast. Watch-towers from which the guard kept vigil day and night to warn the country-side of the approaching "Saracens" may still be seen capping many a tall bulwark of rock along the whole Ligurian and Provençal sea-board.

Still farther to the west, beyond that dark semicircle of ultramarine which we call the Gulf of La Napoule, rises in jagged and broken contour against the horizon the glorious sky-line of the Esterel hills. They seem a painter's range rather than an earthly reality, so wonderfully varied and twisted and indented are their fantastic bluffs and pinnacles. The bright red porphyry which forms their mass is overgrown on its lower slopes by a green carpet of pines and cork oaks; but on all the summits the rock crops boldly out in splendid and beautiful points or needles, rising a hundred feet and over sheer into the sky, and contrasting wonderfully in their full, rich, ruddy hue with the canopy of verdure at their feet. Fancy runs wild and revels in their strange shapes. Here a great dragon rears his red crested head above the sea, and trails his sinuous body, covered with sheeny green, far to the landward, till his forked and blood-red tail rises again in some distant pinnacle of the looming background. There, again, a monstrous whale basks at huge length in the sunshine by the fretted shore. I have never seen elsewhere such wild variety of form and outline, not even among the tossed and crumpled hills of the Jamaican highlands. The slow action of the raindrops and the torrents has carved and scored the hard-grained porphyry into a thousand fanciful caprices with a supple cunning which the hand of man could never equal. No wonder that the first requisite of every villa at Cannes should consist in an unobstructed view over the ever-shifting shadows which dapple the broken ranges of the Esterel. When the afternoon sun lights them up with a liquid haze of pink and purple light, they look like some misty dream of Turner's rather than a solid block of earthly mountains.

At Golfe Jouan we leave the main route along the coast, and turn up a side road by the valley of a little mountain stream. Strange to say, the stream has actually water in it—a rare luxury in this thirsty land of Provence; for most of the Provençal rivers are mere dry torrents, whose beds consist of rock-strewn gulleys on the mountain-sides. Even the greater watercourses, like the Var, except in flood time, have only a few yards of running stream in the centre of a great pebbly waste; while the

Digitized by Google

Durance itself, that mighty river, up the banks of whose swollen flood we have all followed Hannibal in our school days, Livy in hand, resolves itself on personal acquaintance into a narrow, shifting belt of aimless water, which has lost its way about the middle of a hapless desert some mile or so in width. But the little brook by whose side we journey up to Vallauris resembles rather one of our own Cumbrian becks, running in tiny stickles and smooth reaches at the bottom of a deep and smiling dell. Here and there, as we mount, it tumbles over a ledge with a fall which almost deserves to be called a cascade. A landscape without water, says some one, is like the human face without the eye; and the parallel clings in one's memory by its strict applicability. This little dale up which we are winding, an oasis in the dry limestone hills, was the Golden Valley, the Vallis Aurea of the Romans, which soft Provençal lips have clipped into the pretty modern name of Vallauris. On either side the limestone cliffs rise a few hundred feet above the beck, their bare white rocks starred with pink and purple anemonies peeping out among the stunted fir-trees; for the great umbrella pines which justly form the chief glory of Cannes—huge bosses of thick spreading verdure, supported high aloft on tall and gracefully tapering russet boles—for the most part raise their stately canopies on the low, sandy plain and shifting dunes to eastward, between the English quarter and the water-fretted cliffs of the Esterel. We pass on the left a little Devil's Bridge (apparently a single Roman arch on the vicinal road which ascended the valley from the Via Aurelia, to judge by the similarity between its rugged masonry and the square blocks in the mouldering amphitheatre at Fréjus), superseded by two successively more modern structures, one by its side, and another, still newer, a little way farther up the stream; and then a turn of the way at the top of the valley brings us suddenly after a steep climb into the village of Vallauris itself.

Vallauris town, like Vallauris dale, has a decidedly un-Provençal look. Its regular, straight streets and open places suggest rather a modern industrial village than an ancient bourg of more than Roman antiquity. Most of the old towns on the Riviera were perched on almost inaccessible peaks of rock, so that the women and children might be as safe as possible from the kidnapping hands of those ubiquitous Moors who seem everywhere to form the *raison d'être* for every curious social feature of the northern Mediterranean shores. Just in this portion of the coast especially the infidels were above all to be dreaded; for they had firmly established themselves about Hyères and St. Tropez, during the ninth and tenth centuries, in the range of pine-clad hills which still so strangely recall their name, the Montagnes des Maures. Starting from their stronghold of the Garde-Freinet, in the midst of that rugged country, they planted many little Mohammedan colonies all along the coast; and at Cannes itself, built into a modern wall, you may still see the last relic of some forgotten mosque in the shape of a single neglected minaret, crowned to our own times by the tiny gallery where the muez-

Digitized by Google

zin daily called the faithful to worship at the stated hours of Moslem prayer. Under the influence of these frequent visits from the Moors the Christian coastmen regularly perched their villages—mere tortuous labyrinths of crowded alleys—under the shadow of a great castle on some steep crest of strongly scarped rock. Such is the old town of Hyères; such is Bormes, and Grasse, and Cagnes; such, above all, is that strange and mouldering eagle's nest of Eza, a hamlet picturesquely clinging to the very topmost cone of a great brown sugar-loaf, rising in solitary isolation four hundred feet high, on which one looks down with wonder across three deep and dark gorges from the highest ledge of the Corniche at Turbia. But Vallauris had the good luck, as it ultimately turns out, to be utterly destroyed at the end of the fourteenth century; and when, more than a hundred years later, a good monk of Lérins—one of the great house of Lascaris—rebuilt the village in the Golden Valley, he was able to neglect the dismal precautions of the Middle Ages, and give his new town the regular and rectangular ground-plan of an American city. So it happens that modern Vallauris looks as open and cleanly as if one had fallen upon it the midst of wholesome Guelderland itself.

We drive up through the little village square, and across a broad courtyard, to the door of the famous pottery which we have come especially to visit. You enter into a large show-room, with vases and tazzas arranged all round the walls and on the centre tables, in a perfect embarrassment of lovely forms. The first three minutes can only be given over to delight and admiration, and they may be summed up in a prolonged chorus of Ohs. "What a lovely jar!" "Did you ever see anything so exquisite as that *jardinière?*" "Do just look here at this delicious little pipkin!" And so on through all the gamut of ecstasy, from the tiniest little olive-green flower-holder for a humble cottage to the vast Pompeian vases which might stand in the hall of Mr. Alma Tadema's Roman grandees. But after the first flush of delightful excitement at the sight of so much beauty has passed away, one can gaze round a little more calmly, and take in the various details of the scene with a more critical eye.

At many factories of the sort the visitor is handed over at once to the guidance of a regular cicerone, from whom he may pick up piecemeal such scraps of information as are vouchsafed to the general public by the proprietor; but at Vallauris one is allowed to wander at one's own sweet will through the show-rooms and works, and need not be troubled, unless one wishes it especially, by any communication with the employés. Specimens of all the pottery made in the establishment are exhibited in the rooms, with the prices marked in plain figures; and, if you like, you can select your own patterns for yourself, lay them aside upon a little table, and make up the total on your own account. So we were glad at first to make acquaintance with all the lovely things we saw about us in this quiet manner, and only troubled the few people we found in the rooms whenever we actually wanted a piece of information. We were the first

Digitized by Google

visitors of the day, having started early on purpose—for in the afternoon all fashionable Cannes comes out to stare at the vases—and no more notice was taken of our presence than if we had not been in the place at all. For those who really wish to study the pottery such freedom from supervision is particularly pleasant. You do not feel compelled to buy everything that you look at, nor to abstain from looking at a shape that pleases you because you are not going to buy it. So we took advantage of our liberty to the fullest degree.

After a while, however, M. Clément Massier, the proprietor, noticing, I suppose, from our questions that we took a deeper interest in the pottery than the average run of visitors, kindly came up and gave us a full account of the origin and growth of his establishment, and many other matters connected with the manufacture. From time immemorial, it seems, the making of pottery has been the staple industry of Vallauris. Antique tiles and fragments of finer workmanship may still be found scattered by thousands on the level space behind the village, known as *les Incourdoures*, which doubtless marks the site of the old Gallo-Roman oppidum. At the present day, besides M. Massier's artistic works, the place contains no less than seventy common pottery factories; and we saw coarse bowls and pipkins by the hundred drying in the sun as we drove up the main street. Perhaps it was the presence of the Roman remains of *les Incourdoures* at his very door which first set the founder of the artistic Vallauris ware thinking of the possibility of bringing home keramic art to the houses of the people. Some antique lamp or vase, picked up, as they often are, among the vineyards and olive groves, may have given the prime hint to the new manufacture. At any rate, some twenty years since M. Massier bethought him of adding a new branch to the common pottery trade in which he had been brought up. He produced a few simple and gracefully shaped pieces after ancient models, and the experiment succeeded to admiration. As visitors from the growing town of Cannes began to buy his pretty ware he waxed more adventurous. He sought out Greek, Roman, and Etruscan models of a higher type. Then a journey into Italy became necessary; so M. Massier started off to go the round of the Italian museums on his artistic quest. At Rome, Florence, Bologna, Turin, he picked up many hints; but it was in the inexhaustible Museo Borbonico at Naples, among the rich treasures disenhumed from the ashes and lava of Pompeii, that he found the larger number of his choicest patterns. Returning to Vallauris, provided with casts and drawings—and the notes with which he has kindly furnished me show what a wonderful power he possesses of knocking off the idea of a vase with a few strokes in a thumb-nail sketch—he set to work to reproduce his Etruscan or Pompeian prototypes "in a commercial spirit." His aim was to popularise ancient art; and he has certainly carried his point. "As Cannes grew," he said to me, "we grew with it. Visitors took back our pottery to every part of Europe; and others who saw it there admired and bought. *C'est l'art mis à la portée de tout le monde.*"

Digitized by Google

At first the Vallauris manufacture had two great defects. For one point, it did not ring when struck; and for another, it did not hold water. I remember well how disappointed we were when we bought our first lot of slender olive-green and pale yellow vases, light jugs with curling handles, like those from which the Hebe of Hellenic gems pours out the nectar for Zeus, and attempted to arrange a few white jonquils and golden daffodils against the dark green of the vase; but, to our grief, we found the surface all crusted next morning by a white clinging efflorescence, which the water had brought through and deposited on the outside. Moreover, the material was painfully fragile. Even with our own careful dusting the handles of a semi-Egyptian cup "came off in our hands," as the housemaids say, after a most annoying fashion, especially as we had no one but ourselves to scold for it. But numerous experiments have at last succeeded in remedying all these defects, and the ware is now technically perfect. It rings, when struck, with a note clear and resonant as bell-metal; it resists breakage as successfully as the best Japanese pottery; and it holds water without difficulty, of which fact I have at this moment ocular demonstration, as I am writing with a duplicate bunch of jonquils and daffodils before my eyes, arranged in still lovelier contrast with a certain dark green Trojan vase, where faint wave-lines of black are shot between the sombre ground-colour in a wonderful fashion, of which I shall have more to say hereafter.

These Trojan shapes, which have only recently been added to the stock, are among the loveliest and simplest of all. They are copied from the patterns which Dr. Schliemann unearthed at Troy, and they possess some points of superiority even to the Greek and Pompeian models. Many of them are suggestions from gourds and other natural vegetable forms. A couple of years since I had critically studied the Schliemann collection in the South Kensington Museum for a day or two, in connexion with a subject on which I was then engaged; and so I was able readily to recognise a Trojan as soon as I saw it. Even in the originals themselves, buried as they had been for ages under the prehistoric ruins of Ilium, and crusted with the concreted clay of fifty centuries, one could not but admire the exquisite simplicity and effectiveness of the primitive forms. Reproduced, however, in exact imitation of shape, with the delicate tones and shades of Vallauris superadded, they were quite surprisingly lovely. Here was a little tripod, a sort of miniature cauldron supported on three tiny feet, the very embodiment of simple grace. Here again was a flask of perfect proportions, speaking out in mute language the delicate yet all-unconscious taste of some prehistoric potter. And here once more was a quaintly beautiful jug, formed by a careless twirl or two of the primæval wheel, and marked for all its ornament with the staring eyes and curved beak of the owl-faced goddess Athene. How strange it seems that these old half-mythical Trojans should have produced shapes five thousand years ago which still astonish us in this

Digitized by Google

too conscious nineteenth century by their native elegance and their unpremeditated taste.

With increased prosperity and popularity the Vallauris works have gone on to higher, or at least to more ambitious flights. They have taken to manufacturing large and handsome garden vases and flower-stands, stately ornaments for halls or vestibules, and magnificent decorative bas-reliefs for wealthy houses. Some of these are from antique models, while others are from designs specially prepared by well-known French artists. They are in their way very handsome and splendid objects, and, considering their size and workmanship, are marvels of cheapness—as, indeed, is everything about the place. Yet, to my mind, the simple and graceful little vases and pipkins with which Vallauris started are more intrinsically pleasing than these costlier and larger modern additions. Perhaps it is well that each man should most admire what comes best within the reach of his own particular purse; and if I had a house in Mayfair I have no doubt I might fancy some of the splendid moulded tazzas on great tripod stands, which would fitly decorate my drawing-room; but, as matters now stand, I must confess to a more special delight in the little Trojan cruse or Etruscan beaker which I can buy for no greater expenditure than a couple of francs. Without detracting from the beauty of the larger objects, it seems to me the special merit of Vallauris that it has brought lovely shapes and exquisite colours within the range of even the most modest purse.

I have often asked myself, What is the peculiar nature of the sense of beauty which we derive from the sight of these Vallauris vases? Perhaps it may resolve itself into only two main elements—the beauty of colour and the beauty of form. And it is this very simplicity, this purity of design, which lends them all their charm. If we look at a common English earthenware vase, disfigured by knobby excrescences in the shape of handles, and covered by bright red and yellow flowers, we see at once that it has no beauty of form worth speaking of, and that what little it has is masked and overlaid by the painted design. The coloured figures distract our attention from the general curves of the outline to their own particular shapes. But when, as with the old style of Vallauris vases, the colouring is uniform throughout, and is also quiet and retiring in tone, we do not find our thoughts distracted from the beauty of form by the conflicting claims of a painted pattern. Now, beauty of form is certainly a higher mode of æsthetic pleasure than beauty of colour; and in this deliberate sacrifice of the lower to the higher feeling we get the secret of that sense of purity which we instinctively attach to these lovely shapes. We all feel the truth of this analysis in the case of sculpture. A pure white marble statue is a far higher art product than a coloured Dresden statuette. Even the tinted Venus, lovely as it undoubtedly was, seemed to me, and probably to most others who looked at it with a critical eye, a sacrifice of the purer beauty of form to the less pure beauty of colour. There is a figure of a dog in the South

Digitized by Google

Kensington Museum to which Mr. Ruskin attaches a quite special importance as a model of all that is false in art. This dog is sculptured in black and white marble, the black and white portions respectively answering to the spots on the original animal. To those who have seen the figure in question further criticism is unnecessary.

In a statue we get form in one of its purest embodiments. Nevertheless, even there it is not form, pure and simple, but human form, that we admire. And, to my mind, those statues most truly attain the ideal excellence of sculpture which give us only a single perfect human figure in isolation. Composition introduces a certain element of plot—tells a certain story, so to speak—and thus interferes with the one central beauty of shape. Moreover, each form then partly interrupts and hides the other. Hence I personally prefer an Apollo or a Venus to a Laocoon or an Antigone. Again, for the same reason, nude figures are far more statuesque than draped; and if we admit drapery at all, it must be of the sort which suggests and develops, rather than that which conceals or cramps, the limbs beneath, or else we degenerate at last into those monstrosities in frock-coats and trousers which our modern sculptors are compelled to produce to order for the dubious decoration of our manufacturing towns. Now, the antique vase gives us beauty of form in another mode; not human or animal, but almost absolute. Its curves and swelling outlines are in themselves beautiful, and need conform to no other rules than those of the absolute beauty; whereas human forms are bound down to certain special applications of the absolutely beautiful lines, in accordance with the organic laws of the human figure. Hence I am not sure that in pottery we do not get the very purest mode of beauty of form, though of course in the case of sculpture a thousand connected emotions of the human heart are roused as they can never be roused by the dead clay of the potter. The face and bust of a Clytie can awake a thrill on many a subtle chord which no deft combination of simple curves and colours could ever touch.

For somewhat similar reasons I like best, myself, those little simple vases which trust entirely for their effect to a few well-marked strokes of outline, rather than those moulded shapes which contain figures in relief, disturbing, to my mind, the singleness and unity of the composition. Yet each type has doubtless beauties of its own. The plain rounded bowls, and jugs, and amphoræ have simplicity to recommend them. In others a touch of quaintness is added by a few slight indentations, made by pressing the thumb into the moist clay on the wheel. Here a fanciful air is given by undulating the lip; there more grace is thrown into the sweeping bend of the twin handles. Triplets break the monotony in one; a careless side twist gives a tone of freedom to another. All these types are turned on the wheel, and so modelled by the hand alone; those which are moulded in casts, and afterwards retouched by the graver, being less spontaneous, please my fancy less. But even these are lovely after their kind, the feeling of *richness* replacing that of *simplicity*. It

Digitized by Google

is this element of richness which gives their special beauty to most Renaissance works and to much Oriental and Mauresque decoration. I am sorry to say, however, the ornate types seem greater favourites with the English public than those purer and more graceful models by which Vallauris first gained its artistic name. Our national taste runs too much towards the seemingly costly to appreciate thoroughly a style whose simplicity is its greatest charm.

Another point which doubtless tells half unconsciously in our minds in favour of the Vallauris shapes is their distinct flavour of the antique. We love each little vase the better because we know it is Trojan, or Etruscan, or Hellenic, and because we recognise in it a form which we associate with all that is sacred to us in ancient art. Beautiful in themselves, they become more beautiful to our minds by their suggestion of a dim antiquity and their relation to our cherished stories of Italy and free Hellas, the mother of all our arts.

At the same time the colour of the Vallauris ware gives it a point of advantage which is all its own. The forms we had already, if only in museums and art treasuries; but the colours are something entirely new and very beautiful. Being uniform, they do not interfere with the appreciation of the shapes; and they are dexterously chosen in the most exquisite and dainty tones, which harmonise admirably with the nature of the designs. The two earliest colours—the well-known olive-green and tawny umber yellow—were slightly adapted, I think, from the common native glaze of the country; for I have seen ordinary jars and saucepans of very similar hue, only cruder in tint and wanting the one touch of art, hanging up outside shops in all the little villages of Provence, from Nice to Toulon. But other and still more perfect hues have since been introduced, most of them in the same subdued tone as the original colours, though even more artistic in effect. The latest introduction is rather different in kind, a pale and somewhat sickly turquoise blue, yet not without a certain meretricious prettiness of its own. This turquoise blue is a great favourite with our countrymen, to please whose fancy it has been adopted, "for we must allow that you other English, as a rule," says M. Massier with a deprecating smile, "have very bad taste in the matter of colours." Still the blue, though on a different line from the other shades, is lovely in its own way. It would look beautiful as a foil to the lurid purple blossoms and the dark green foliage of those graceful fritillaries which every Oxford-man has picked by handfuls in the marshy meadows around Iffley lock. But the finest colour of all is the dark green shot with black, to which I have already alluded, and which really approaches the limit of perfection. The trick of shooting the glaze in this way was discovered by accident, and forms a trade secret; but the Japanese visitors, who saw the ware at the Paris Exhibition in 1878, knew the secret, and told M. Massier at once how it was managed. Of course, as always happens with our latest European inventions, the method had been practised in Japan from time immemorial.

Digitized by Google

These colours, it seems to me, have two chief points of attraction. The first is their delicacy—that is to say, the absence of all coarse or excessive stimulation. What we call a *crude* colour is really one that stimulates us more than enough, just as the boom of a drum does when compared with the note of a violin. The second point is their novelty. We like change, and change in moderation is good and healthy for us.

Unfortunately, the general market is sure in the long run to effect some deterioration in the artistic quality of the goods offered to it, even if it only succeeds in spoiling a few special types to gratify its own palate. The blue Flemish jugs which we all so much admire were beautiful enough in the old days; but cheap modern imitations, in coarse and badly glazed stone ware, have vulgarised the style, till now even the genuine originals hardly look as beautiful in our eyes as formerly. So, too, the European market is rapidly debasing the exquisite colour-taste of the Japanese, the delicate tracery of the chased Benares ware, and the admirable harmony of Persian tile-work. Something of the same sort has unhappily befallen one or two specimens of Vallauris pottery. I am sorry to say that the manufacturers have been forced to paint by hand bunches of flowers and little enamelled swallows on many of their vases. The public *will* have them, and it must be satisfied. The flowers and figures are very well painted, and are excellent examples of their own kind, but they are certainly a desecration of the simple old Vallauris style. M. Massier himself, who has a most refined and cultured taste, does not care for them; yet he cannot but make what the world asks of him. I hope in future all buyers of Vallauris ware will compare the plain and the figured specimens before they decide upon their purchases. If they really prefer the painted vases, of course they must buy them; but I believe a few minutes' reflection would often turn the scale in favour of the purer taste.

From the show-rooms we passed to the works, where we fortunately obtained the guidance of a very intelligent and artistically-minded workman. This portion of the establishment is extremely interesting to those who are fond of keramic art as a hobby and understand it technically, but it does not contain much which would long detain the general public. So I shall not keep you many minutes engaged upon the mysteries of clays and pastes, of enamels and firing, but shall only tell you the two or three simple points which are likely to strike the non-technical mind.

The Vallauris clay is very tractable and plastic, and is mixed in varying proportions of material, according to the work in hand. Most of the ordinary patterns are produced on the potter's wheel, that most primitive of all human machines, which still maintains its place unaltered in our midst. The workman who fashioned an imitation Trojan vase as a specimen before our eyes worked in the very self-same manner as the original artist who wrought the prime model in the ancient and prehistoric city which lies in ruins far beneath even the half-mythical relics of Priam's palace itself. The clay is first well kneaded with the hand,

Digitized by Google

till it looks like a lump of dough, and is then placed on the rotating wheel. As it turns around, the potter models the plastic mass in his hands, coaxing it out here and pressing it in there. The mouldings on the vase are mostly made by the simple use of the finger-nail, which is more sensitive, and so more trustworthy, than any other implement. For the finer mouldings, however, a small piece of metal is employed—price one sou. During the modelling the material is kept very moist, and it answers so wonderfully to the manipulation of the workman that one can readily understand the meaning of that time-honoured Hebrew phrase "as clay in the hand of the potter." Not even molten glass seems so supple and obedient to the maker's will. When the modelling is finished, the superfluous moisture is scraped off by means of another and still more simple instrument of horn, valued at half a sou each. So it will be seen that the whole process of manufacture is about as primitive and uncostly as could be desired.

The more ambitious pieces are fashioned first in plaster-of-Paris casts, and afterwards have the marks of the cast removed by hand, and the delicate points of the design retouched with a graving knife. As to the colour, that is put on as a mineral enamel, which vitrifies in the firing and so forms a glaze. But some of the most beautiful specimens are only very partially glazed, and produce a pretty dulled appearance, not unlike that of "flatted" paint. The terra-cottas, of course, are not glazed at all; and I am rather surprised that some of the vases are not similarly produced in the plain baked clay, without enamel. Grubbing lately in the Roman ruins of Pomponiana, near Hyères, I was much struck by the beautiful effect of the finer unglazed pottery, whose fragments we found amongst the ancient dust-heaps, and it seemed to me that the Vallauris clay was quite good enough to bear comparison with them in the matter of grain, though doubtless it might be found wanting in impermeability.

At Cannes the same night we dreamt we were roaming for ever through a Paradise of crockery-ware, set in the midst of a great palm-shaded orange garden by the side of an endless and billowless deep blue lake. And so ended our first, but not, I trust, our last pilgrimage to Vallauris.

G. A.

Digitized by Google

Marius Bougeard's Amnesty.

THE STORY OF ONE GOOD TURN AND ANOTHER.

I.

MASTER PASCAL LEDOUX, barrister in the town of Ville-Aubry, sat one morning in his study and reflected on all that Providence had done for him. He was healthy, good-looking—at least no girl had ever shown him that she thought the contrary—he had a personable figure, and knew how to clothe it in shapely garments; he had money in the bank, a good practice, and he had lately been elected by his fellow-townsmen to a seat in their municipal council. To crown all, Master Pascal was betrothed to Mdlle. Rosalie Marsault, the only child of the richest notary in the town—a pretty girl whose small hands were to hold a dowry of three hundred thousand francs, to say nothing of those promissory notes on the future, which we call "expectations."

"Well, now, really!" exclaimed Master Ledoux, as he mused upon these blessings; "I can't say that Fortune has frowned upon me." And he smiled. When a man indulges in such a grateful train of thought before he has accomplished half the journey of life, he may reasonably apprehend that the second half of his pilgrimage will not be so happy as the first. But our friend Ledoux was troubled with no misgivings of the kind. Sitting back in his chair and stroking his fresh-shaven chin, he thought complacently of all that he was going to do; and the while his honest round face—for he was plump and ruddy—beamed with an air of intense satisfaction.

"Let us see," said he, spreading out the fat fingers of his left hand and checking off his calculations upon them. "With a hundred thousand francs of Rosalie's dower I'll buy an estate and a baronial château; the second hundred thousand I'll invest; but with the third hundred thousand I'll buy political influence and get elected member of Parliament. *Monsieur Pascal Ledoux, Deputé*: that will look well on my letters: then by-and-by, when I am forty, I'll try for the Senate. Perhaps by that time I shall be a cabinet minister. *Son Excellence Monsieur Ledoux!* That has a nice sound. Why shouldn't I become a cabinet minister, since so many other ninnies —— I may even become President of the Republic. Aha-ha-ah! Everything is possible to a man whom Fortune aids."

Honest Pascal Ledoux laughed broadly at the idea of coming to such high honours; but he was quite in earnest about his ambitious schemes. He had always been popular; even as a schoolboy and a student he

Digitized by Google

made new friends every day; and now he had reached a time of life when men begin to understand the value of being everywhere liked. Ledoux thirsted for popularity, because he had found the first tastes of it so sweet and fortifying. He rose and examined himself in the glass, just to see if he had the face of one born to august destinies. He thought he had. He glanced down his calves and liked the shape of them. He stretched forth his hand crying: "*Messieurs les Senateurs!*" as if he were haranguing his future colleagues, and he enjoyed the sound of his own voice. He was in the act of combing his hair with his fingers to see what style of head-dressing suited him best, when there was a ring at the door, and presently his future father-in-law, M. Marsault, the notary, walked in, hale and bluff.

"My dear Pascal," said the old gentleman, without preamble, "I've come to ask a favour of you. I want you to exert your influence to obtain the pardon of a transported Communist."

"Of half a dozen if you like," laughed Pascal, accommodating the notary with a seat near the fire.

"No, not of half a dozen: heaven forbid!" exclaimed M. Marsault, as he removed his gold spectacles and wiped them on the skirt of his coat. "The man whose pardon I want was, I think, unjustly condemned; his name is Marius Bougeard. Not euphonious names I admit, but then he had no hand in choosing them. He was accused of arson, murder, shooting, &c. in the civil war, and transported almost without a trial. He had first been sentenced to death, but he escaped execution by falling ill of the jaundice at about the time fixed for his despatch. I believe there was some question of shooting him in spite of his jaundice."

"Such savagery makes one's blood boil," ejaculated Ledoux, who had a tender heart which boiled easily.

"Well, I don't know that society would have missed Bougeard much if he had been shot," remarked the notary; "but since he is alive, and has suffered more than six years' exile, I think it is time that he should have his innocence established. At least such is the opinion of Rosalie, who is interesting herself in the case."

"Ah! it is Mdlle. Rosalie who ——"

"Yes, my daughter has heard the story from Bougeard's mother, an old woman who keeps a lace-shop. Mdme. Bougeard has spoken so much about her son that Rosalie feels quite touched, and this morning she said to me: 'Papa, if M. Pascal wants to make me a wedding present, let it be Marius Bougeard's pardon. There is nothing I should like better than that.'"

"Such generosity honours Mdlle. Rosalie!" exclaimed Pascal Ledoux, wiping a drop of moisture from his eye; for, as above said, he was easily accessible to soft emotions.

"Well, come home to lunch," said the notary, rising, "and you shall hear the story from Lili's own lips. I confess—h'm—that I don't understand much of it, myself."

Digitized by Google

The two men went out together. The notary's house was close at hand—a big stone mansion with offices on the ground floor, and a large garden behind. In a capital such a residence would have been called a palace; as it was, M. Marsault could boast that he had the finest house in Ville-Aubry after the prefect's, and he used always to walk in it with his head erect as if the consciousness of this fact gave him great satisfaction. Leading his future son-in-law towards the garden, he called to Mdlle. Rosalie, who was watering a bed of roses: "Hi, Lili, here's Pascal come to lunch with us, and he agrees to do all you wish."

Rosalie dropped her water-pot, and ran forward smiling. She was a really pretty girl with fair hair and blue eyes, who greeted the barrister without embarrassment, quite cordially, as if they were old friends: "Good morning, M. Ledoux. It's so kind to interest yourself in my *protégé:* but I'll show you his photograph, and you'll see what a nice young man he must have been. He has the most lovely dark curly hair and black eyes; and it seems he used to write verses, paint, sing, play, and dance all to perfection."

"That's his mother's account of him," interrupted the notary, drily.

"Oh, but, papa, it's everybody's account of him. Every one will tell you that M. Marius Bougeard would have become the pride of the town if it had not been for the malice of his enemies, who got him transported."

"Well, mademoiselle, I promise to do my best to procure the release of this fascinating creature," said Paul Ledoux, amused.

"Thanks; I'll tell you all about him at luncheon!" exclaimed the notary's daughter. "You'll see how unjustly treated he has been."

Pascal Ledoux was so desirous of being convinced that he listened with but half his usual common sense to the explanations which Rosalie presently vouchsafed. It did certainly strike him as odd that Marius Bougeard should have joined the Commune at all, and still more so that his detractors should have been able to prove before a court-martial that he had plundered certain houses, burned others, and caused hostages to be shot; but then the Commune was a mystery altogether, and nobody had yet been able to make out the rights or wrongs of it. So far as he was concerned, Pascal Ledoux was willing to take up Bougeard's cause, in the first place because Rosalie wanted him to do so; and in the next because the advocacy of a political convict's wrongs was likely to put him in excellent odour with the Liberal electors of Ville-Aubry. The "Amnesty Question" was just then beginning to agitate political circles in Paris; by making himself one of its champions in the provinces Pascal would make the best bid possible for Radical support at the next parliamentary election.

Accordingly, within twenty-four hours of his luncheon with M. Marsault, our friend had drawn up the "case" of Marius Bougeard in feeling language, and had sent it in the form of a letter to the editor of the *Trompette*, the local Liberal print, just by way of firing the first shot. The letter was much read and discussed in the town; but in the course

Digitized by Google

of a day or two Pascal received the visit of one M. Lesage, the oldest and wisest practitioner at the Bar, who shook his head at him and said: "My friend, you have nothing to do with getting a pardon for Marius Bougeard. The fellow was a scamp, who almost broke his mother's heart by his follies before he joined the Commune, and deserved shooting for his crimes. I am afraid you are being made the tool of some designing knaves."

"You are quite mistaken," answered Pascal, coldly. "It is my future father-in-law, M. Marsault, who has chiefly urged me to take this course."

"Well, then, just you listen to me, and beware of M. Marsault," said M. Lesage, laying a hand on Pascal's shoulder. "Oh, yes, you may start and feel furious against me for speaking against your future father-in-law, but it is as well that you should know the full truth before your marriage rather than have to discover it afterwards. M. Marsault is solicitor to a very wealthy old man in this town, named Benot, and it is pretty notorious that he has been holding all his client's scrip in his hands for years. Now Benot has two nephews: one the notary Grugy, who is your uncle's rival and greatest enemy; the other, this Marius Bougeard, who is in exile. Now assuming as I do that M. Marsault has been making rather a free use of Benot's money——"

"Sir, how dare you suppose such a thing?" interrupted Pascal.

"Well, I *do* suppose it on the faith of facts that have come to my knowledge," answered old Lesage, coolly; "and I add this, that it is M. Marsault's best interest to get M. Benot to leave all his property to Marius Bougeard sooner than to Grugy. The latter, when he came into old Benot's fortune, might ask M. Marsault for accounts which it would be disagreeable to furnish; whereas Marius Bougeard, if he owed his pardon to M. Marsault's intercession, and a fortune into the bargain, would not be disposed to look too closely into things. Now do you understand?"

"No, I don't," replied Pascal, hotly.

"Well, I pity you," said M. Lesage, amicably; "for I look upon you as a rising young man, and don't want to see you shove your head into a net."

"I consider that you have shamefully traduced M. Marsault, who is an honourable man," cried Pascal Ledoux.

"Good-morning then, but you will see in the end that I was right," responded M. Lesage.

II.

M. Lesage *was* in the right, and he had stated nothing untrue concerning M. Marsault, of whom circumstances had made a rogue. We say circumstances, because Nature had rather fashioned this lawyer for playing the part of an honest man than of a villain. He was grave, quiet, dis-

Digitized by Google

creet; he loved his ease; he had no extravagant taste, such as gambling, picture-buying, or china-fancying; he paid his taxes regularly, owed no tradesman money, and would have lived to the end of his days the most blameless life imaginable, had it not been for one ambition which he cherished—that of becoming rich.

A French notary stands in a position exceptionally favourable for speculating with other people's money. He is, in a manner, a Government official, as the number of notaries is limited, and their letters of appointment are all signed by Government. As a consequence, a notary inspires more confidence than an English solicitor. He is member of a corporation, who, from *esprit de corps*, feel bound to make good any losses that may be incurred by one of their number, so that a client has the certainty of knowing that if he is robbed by his notary, the Chamber of Notaries will pay him all his dues. Thus a Frenchman makes of a notary his confidant; he takes advice from him about his marriage; he gives him the title-deeds of his land, and puts into his keeping all his savings under the form of scrip. M. Marsault had in this way become possessed of all M. Benot's fortune, and had speculated with the same as he had done with the money of other clients, hoping that he might enrich himself without doing them any harm. Unfortunately his speculations had not always been successful, insomuch that he had felt compelled to exert all his influence on M. Benot in order that the latter might bequeath his wealth to Marius Bougeard, sooner than to the notary Grugy, who would quickly have made *him*—Marsault—feel very uncomfortable by looking too closely into his accounts. But Bougeard was in a penal colony; and it was necessary not only to bring him back pardoned, but likewise to convince M. Benot of his innocence, before the latter could be persuaded to acknowledge him as his heir. M. Benot was a meek little man, who had picked up his wealth in selling rabbit-skins. On some questions, however, he was more stubborn than most of the men who pass for obstinate, and certainly nothing could have induced him to leave his money to a revolutionary blackguard rightfully convicted of dishonesty.

That is why M. Marsault had finessed so adroitly in order to get Marius's case put into good hands; that is why he now began so instantly to urge upon Pascal Ledoux the necessity of acting and talking with energy on behalf of the ex-Communist.

It was about a week after Ledoux had commenced his operations by writing letters to newspapers and to personages in high office, that the idea occurred to him of holding a grand amnesty meeting in a public edifice. To do this it was requisite to obtain the mayor's permission; but the mayor would not at first give it, apprehending disorderly scenes. Pascal referred to the Minister of the Interior, and after an exchange of letters which, on being printed in the papers, served greatly to advertise his name, he got the required leave, and announced the meeting to the world by means of flaming red posters thus worded:—

Digitized by Google

AMNESTY! AMNESTY! AMNESTY!

An Address on the cruel wrongs suffered by a fellow-townsman of ours, the citizen Marius Bougeard, will be delivered by M. Pascal Ledoux and other patriots in the Theatre of Ville-Aubry, on Sunday next, at 2 P.M. A collection will be made at the doors on behalf of the exile; and ten centimes admission money will be charged, also, for the exile's benefit.

Fellow-townsmen! attend in a body!

Pascal Ledoux was surprised at the mass of people which this invitation drew on the appointed day; but he was soon able to perceive that the sentiments of this mob were not unanimous. As soon as the theatre doors were open they rushed in helter-skelter, and presently began to fight over the question as to whether Marius Bougeard was a martyr or a scamp. Many who had known him declined to talk of him otherwise than as an ill-conditioned vagabond of the worst type, and this naturally incensed the enthusiasts on the other side. These proved to be in a majority, and they favoured Pascal Ledoux with a tremendous acclamation when he marched upon the stage of the theatre in a swallow-tail coat and white tie to deliver his address.

Standing at a small table, Pascal had behind him the members of the local Amnesty Commission—an unwashed crew—whilst in the stage box to his right he saw his pretty betrothed Rosalie seated between her father and old M. Benot. This sight was enough to string all the chords of Pascal's eloquence. After commencing with a touching narrative of the convict's early career (narrative occasionally interrupted by cat-calls), he broke out into indignant rebuke of the persons who denied Bougeard's claims to political saintship. "I declare to you all," he bawled, "that when this man comes back he will become the glory of our town."

"Bosh! you'll be too happy to give him a wide berth." (This from an impatient listener.)

"I shan't give him a wide berth. My house shall be open to him at all times."

"Well, then, he'll borrow money of you, and eat out your larder."

"I don't care for that, sir."

"He'll drink up your wines."

"He shall be free to drink, and the more the better."

"He'll oust you from your seat in the town council, you'll see."

"Gentlemen, I profess I am not ambitious."

"Well, then, he'll take away your bride from you and marry her himself, dower and all."

This last shaft disconcerted Pascal, because it made everybody laugh. Mdlle. Marsault was seen to be in the stage box, and the audience gave her a cheer; but some were ungallant enough to hiss and to mew. The poor girl, red with confusion, cast an appealing look at Pascal to curtail his remarks. He was about to comply rather reluctantly—for he was as full of steam as a kettle—when an unforeseen incident occurred. A telegraph boy suddenly appeared on the stage, and handed Pascal

Digitized by Google

a message. Amid general silence the latter broke the envelope, and cried: "Victory, my friends—victory! The Government has yielded. Just listen to this: '*The Minister of the Interior informs M. Ledoux that Marius Bougeard is included in the amnesty of two hundred convicts which the President of the Republic signed to-day.*'"

"Bravo! *Vive la République!*" shouted most of the audience, carried away by this unexpected news.

"I congratulate this meeting upon the moral effect of their demonstration," sang out Pascal, quite excited.

"No, no, it is all your doing!" chorused the audience. "*Vive Ledoux!* Hurrah for the friend of the downtrodden! Hurrah for the Commune!"

Amid extraordinary commotion the meeting broke up, and Pascal hurried round to meet Rosalie as she was coming out of the theatre, and to receive her felicitations. A glance from her brimming eyes and a squeeze from her tiny hand rewarded him amply.

"You spoke nobly, M. Ledoux," said she—"and now when will this poor young man be home?"

"Oh, in about six weeks or two months, I suppose."

"Not till then?—not till six weeks? Oh, what a cruel time it will be to wait!"

"But why are you so anxious to see the man?" asked Ledoux, rather astonished.

"Oh, I was only thinking of his poor mother!" answered Rosalie, faltering.

But she blushed deeply as she said this, and honest Pascal Ledoux could not help thinking her a very philanthropical young lady; indeed, all the more so when, on the next day, she timidly slipped a hundred franc note into his hand, and begged him to accept it for the subscription that was being raised to furnish the ex-Communist with a little purse of money on his way home.

III.

It has been said that old M. Benot, the rabbit-skin seller, was a meek man; but this did not make him insensible to personal glory. He was much flattered by the laudatory terms in which Pascal Ledoux had spoken of his nephew Marius Bougeard, and his heart warmed towards the castaway, whom he had never till then befriended in any way. The notary Grugy, his other heir, heard this and took alarm. He began collecting proofs of Marius's past iniquities—the debts he had contracted and left unpaid, the many pranks and follies he had committed, and so forth; and he proceeded to send anonymous letters daily to old M. Benot, warning him of what a graceless scamp his nephew was. Old Benot did not altogether credit these communications, but they ended by making him uncomfortable. He went one morning and sought the

Digitized by Google

notary Marsault, whom he found closeted with Pascal Ledoux, and he laid before them the heap of papers he had received.

"Those are from Grugy!" exclaimed Marsault at once. "He has disguised his hand; but I know it all the same."

"It's very base of him to traduce Marius in this way," grumbled old Benot; "but I used to think Grugy such a truthful man: are you sure there is no warranty for these accusations of his?"

"Why, would you believe an envious rogue who is simply afraid that you will disinherit him? If I were ten years younger, I would go and tweak Grugy by the nose, and force him to retract these unmanly accusations against my *protégé*, or else I would oblige him to come out and fight me."

"*I* will take this course," ejaculated Pascal Ledoux, stoutly. "After all I have said in Marius's favour, I consider the poor fellow to be in some sense under my protection, until he comes back to France, and can take care of himself. I'll go and see Grugy this minute."

"Don't be too rash!" exclaimed M. Marsault; though he was delighted to see Pascal act with such spirit, because he saw what a good effect it produced on old Benot's mind.

Pascal Ledoux was about thirty years old, and the notary Grugy was forty, so that there was no such disproportion between their ages as made it impossible they should meet in duel. Grugy, though no lion, was the first to propose a mortal combat; for he was exasperated to think that old Benot's fortune was slipping out of his reach, and he accused Ledoux of being the chief author of his troubles. Ledoux, on paying his visit, had expected to encounter a timid, conscience-stricken person, whom he could browbeat: he found a defiant churl, who snarled like a bull-dog: "Yes, I did send those anonymous letters," barked he; "what of it? If you feel offended, send me your two seconds, and we'll fight till one of us falls."

"All right," said Ledoux; "I'll take you at your word. You and others must be taught that the man who insults Marius Bougeard puts a deadly affront on me."

"If that's the case, you had better pay your friend's debts; that will be a first step towards whitewashing his reputation. Good-morning now, and send me your seconds as soon as you like."

It was arranged by-and-by that the two champions should meet at eight o'clock the next morning, with pistols. In the meantime Ledoux reflected that Marius Bougeard's debts ought certainly to be paid, and he managed to get a list of them from the exile's mother. That old lady, who kept a lace-shop, professed herself to be unable to pay; but, as the bills scarcely amounted to three thousand francs in all, the good-natured Pascal devoted this afternoon to going about the town and settling them. "Marius can repay me by-and-by, when he comes into Benot's fortune," mused he; "the main point for the present is that his name shall be freed from stain."

Digitized by Google

In accordance with this object, Pascal met the notary Grugy at the appointed hour next day, and the two exchanged shots. Pascal's bullet lodged in the notary's collar-bone and smashed it; but Grugy's bullet, whisking past Pascal's face, which was half turned, carried away a part of his nose. The gallant lawyer was disfigured—not irremediably, but in such wise at least that the full beauty of his nasal organ could never more be restored. He had a prescience of this as he left the battle-field, but he consoled himself by reflecting that the fair sex never look unkindly on the scars obtained in doughty combat. Rosalie had often told him, with a sigh, that she wished the days of sword-wearing would come back, and that gallants would fight oftener for their lady loves.

Nevertheless, Pascal Ledoux went home to bed, and did not think it prudent to leave his house until his nose should have been healed, so far as was feasible, in order to be in a presentable condition. Before this consummation was attained twenty days had elapsed; and the hero, for whom Pascal had bled—Marius Bougeard—had at last returned to Ville-Aubry.

IV.

Pascal was the first to hear of his sudden arrival. He was seated at his bed-room window, in the twilight of an autumn evening, ruefully examining his deformed nose in a mirror, and wondering whether the missing quarter-inch of it could be artificially supplied, when his servant abruptly threw open the door and announced in bated breath—"M. Marius Bougeard."

A nasty-looking little man—unwashed, unshaved, unkempt, and smelling of spirits—shambled into the room. His clothes were greasy and almost in rags: his linen was foul, and had never been starched: the fellow looked so utterly mean and hideous altogether, that Pascal, who had imagined the ex-Communist to be an Adonis, remained staring at him with his mouth wide open, unable to articulate.

"What? are you Marius Bougeard?" he inquired at last.

"Yes, sir; I'm the man," whined the returned convict.

"Are you sure that you are the one we were expecting? Perhaps there were two Bougeards in New Caledonia?"

"No, sir; I'm the only one—the native of Ville-Aubry; the patriot whose release was obtained by your kindly intercession."

"Ah, well, come to my arms then!" cried the good-hearted Ledoux, who began to feel compassion for the sorry plight of the exile. "Allow me to embrace you fraternally. There! My poor fellow, how much you must have suffered! Sit down and tell me all about it; and first, how comes it that you arrive in this sudden way? We had intended to give you a grand reception. I was going to make you a speech of welcome."

"I should like some refreshment before speaking," faltered Bougeard, "for I have scarcely eaten since yesterday. The Government has behaved vilely to me."

Digitized by Google

The poor fellow looked, in truth, as if he were half famished. Pascal, whose pity for him increased every moment, rang the bell and ordered that some dinner should be fetched him from the restaurant. Meanwhile a bottle of wine was brought up, and the Communist, having tossed off a few glasses, felt revived, and was enabled to give an account of himself. He explained that he had been bundled on board a convict ship without knowing whether he had been pardoned or not; and that on his arrival at Toulon he had been consigned to the police, who informed him that he was amnestied, but that he must beware of creating any disturbance. A small town of Provence was assigned him for his residence, and he was ordered to report himself at the police office once a week, being warned that in case of non-compliance he would be packed off to New Caledonia again without ceremony. By the time Marius Bougeard had got to this point in his recital, dinner was brought in, and his mouth became closed for a time. But Pascal was indignant at all that he had just heard, and paced the room in agitation.

"Police—reporting—packed off to New Caledonia again! I never heard of such a thing!" he cried, with that snuffle which had become his habitual intonation since the accident to his nose. "Why, the police have been imposing upon you. You are amnestied, and cannot be required to report yourself."

"So I thought, sir," grumbled Marius humbly, with his mouth full.

"Ah, but we'll see you righted!" continued Pascal, raising his voice. "We'll rouse public opinion in your favour. You mustn't be baulked of your public reception. Why, a banquet was going to be given in your honour, with the mayor presiding."

"A banquet to *me?*" ejaculated the ex-convict, looking as if he thought his interlocutor mad.

"Yes; a banquet with speeches, and a regular Republican demonstration. And you shall have it, I promise. Meanwhile you had better sleep here to-night. Shall I send and tell your mother that you have arrived?"

"No—o; I think I had rather wait till to-morrow," replied Marius, with some alacrity.

"Yes, perhaps you had better. To-morrow morning, when you have sufficiently rested, we'll send you the tailor, hosier, barber; and you'll look a different man. There, take another glass of wine, and then you'll have some coffee and a cigar, won't you, before going to bed?"

Pascal Ledoux did the honours of his abode as if he were entertaining a prince. He gave Marius so much wine that this patriot became fuddled, and tottered to bed somewhat unsteadily. Whilst undressing he hiccoughed the *Marseillaise*, and as soon as he was between the sheets called for a glass of grog by way of nightcap. This potent beverage, however, did not send him at once to sleep; and the ex-Communist lay on his back for at least an hour marvelling by what turn of fortune it

Digitized by Google

was that he was going to be welcomed back as a hero into the land whence he had been driven forth as an outcast.

"I wonder who that chap Ledoux is?" he mused, hazily. "I don't remember knowing him when I was a boy; yet they tell me he had the chief hand in getting my pardon. An ugly fellow anyhow, with that broken nose of his. I wonder whether I shall be able to screw a few hundred francs out of him for pocket-money to-morrow. He looks fool enough for anything."

And with this grateful reflection towards his benefactor the returned Communist fell asleep.

V.

No faculty is so common in man as that of being able to accommodate oneself without difficulty to good fortune. Marius Bougeard had been living for six years the life of a common-law convict; for he had been sentenced as a murderer and incendiary, not as a mere rebel, and this had entailed his wearing the prison dress and crop, and having a chain fastened to his ankle. His diet had been beans, his occupation hard labour, and he had once been flogged with a rope's end for trying to escape. All this had not fattened him nor improved his appearance generally. He returned to France lean as a scarecrow, and with all the spirit apparently crushed out of him, for he felt like a criminal, and looked so.

Even after he had been shaved, trimmed, and reclothed, thanks to Pascal's good offices, he did not at once appear at his ease, though conscious that he had recovered some of his good looks. He stared at himself awkwardly in the glass; he glanced nervously towards the door every time he heard a footstep, as if fearful that the police were coming to fetch him. His nervousness was such that Pascal Ledoux could not help noticing it; and slapped him on the back, bidding him be of good cheer, and remember that he must hold his head high as martyr to a great cause. A glass or two of white wine served the purpose of exhilaration better than these exhortations, and sent Marius into the street with the bold front which beseems an innocent, ill-used man. But it was not until he had been actually acclaimed in the open air and embraced by the public authorities, that he plucked up heart and began to comprehend his new destinies.

Pascal Ledoux, walking arm-in-arm with him, took him to the principal civilian café in Ville-Aubry—that which the barristers and merchants frequented. A report of their intended arrival had got bruited, and the place was crowded, so was the street outside. A loud cheer was set up as the pair clove their way through the throng, and on entering the café they were received with a storm of applause, stamping of feet, banging of hats, and cries of "*Vive la Commune!*" Let it be noted that among the gentlemen who thus acclaimed the returned convict there were many who had felt for the Commune, at the time

Digitized by Google

when it was raging, only the sincerest loathing. But Frenchmen are swift to forget; and things that seemed hideous in 1871 had, through the glamour of political illusion, altered their complexion considerably some years later. Marius Bougeard was hailed as the representative of an idea that "vexed Government"—as an "Oppositionist" and member of the "coming phalanx" of politicians; and this would have been enough to ensure him a hearty reception in any circle of ambitious Republicans. Now in this café there were briefless barristers, fee-less doctors, adventurers, journalists—all the men, in short, who form the fringe of the Radical party everywhere. Marius Bougeard had at least this point of superiority over them all—that he had already made himself a "name;" a thing which they were in vain trying to do in their respective walks.

So champagne was uncorked in his honour, and when the foaming glasses had gone round a loud cry was raised for the Communist to climb on a table and make a speech. Elated by the wine he had drunk, Marius complied, and shrieked: "Citizens, this is the proudest day of my life. I thank you for having done justice to my Republican sentiments, and for having understood that persecution could not quench them. I am as warm a supporter of the Red flag now as ever I was; and I trust that the day may not be far distant when we Communists shall have our *revanche* for all we suffered in New Caledonia!"

He went on rambling for a quarter of an hour longer in the above style—this man who a few weeks previously had dragged himself at the feet of the Governor of New Caledonia screaming that if mercy were shown him he would thenceforth live a loyal, law-abiding life. He said such wild things that Pascal Ledoux, who did not wish himself to be reckoned as a Communist, tugged impatiently at his coat-tails. Marius paid no attention. Pascal tugged harder, and the Communist turned short round: "What does that man with the broken nose want?"

"Why, it's Pascal Ledoux," cried several voices, amidst astonished laughter.

"Ledoux? I don't know him!" exclaimed the inebriate orator. "At least, yes; isn't he the man who—who was—m—my friend?"

"Yes, and who gave half his nose for you."

"How—how did he g—give half his nose for me? I didn't w—want his nose—just explain."

"Never mind," faltered poor Pascal, red with confusion; and he whispered in the rogue's ear: "Just come along with me, or the police may be taking you. You are going too far."

"I don't care a pin for the police," drawled Marius, striking a defiant attitude; and, this sentiment having elicited some bravoes, he cried, laughing: "It strikes me that my friend Ledoux is too timid; perhaps he's a Moderate Republican."

"Yes, yes," assented the audience, amused; "he's a Moderate."

"Ah, well, I don't like Moderates—give me only thoroughgoing men.

Digitized by Google

I'd deny my best friend if he was a Moderate. Ledoux, m—my boy, you'll have to mend your manners."

All this was too much for the disgusted Pascal, who beat a retreat, leaving Marius in the café, and ran off to M. Marsault's house. He forgot, as he ran in, that Rosalie had not seen him since the accident that had befallen his nose, and he could not at first understand why she screamed and put her hand to her heart on perceiving him. When he remembered the truth, poor wretch! he coloured, and said: "Oh, mademoiselle, I hope I do not seem too horrible to you with my disfigurement; recollect it was in a duel that I got this wound!"

"Oh, yes, M. Ledoux; forgive me for being so disturbed," she answered, faintly. "I shall get used to the s—sight of this accident. But where is M. Bougeard? Papa tells me he had begged you to invite him to luncheon with us."

"Ah, mademoiselle, I regret to say that we have been cruelly deceived in this man, who is behaving disgracefully," said Pascal; and he gave an account of what had passed at the café.

"Poor fellow! After his many privations, a glass of champagne was naturally too strong for him," remarked Rosalie, compassionately. "You should not have left him alone at the café, M. Ledoux."

"But really, mademoiselle, he wouldn't come with me."

"No, no, it wasn't kind of you, M. Ledoux, to leave him in this way."

"But, mademoiselle, he wasn't in a fit state to be presented to you."

"Ah! now you are ungenerous," pouted the spoiled beauty, "I shan't make my peace with you unless you go back to the café this minute, and bring our poor friend home to luncheon."

There was nothing for it but to obey; so Pascal started for the café, but on arriving there found his bird had flown. The landlord could only say that M. Bougeard had gone out with a number of other gentlemen, but he did not know where. Fearful to return to M. Marsault's without him, Pascal hunted for the rogue all over the town for the next two hours; he even went to the police-station to look for him; but all in vain. At last he returned crestfallen to the notary's house, and was surprised to hear the sounds of laughter and jollity issuing from the dining-room. He fancied he could detect Marius's voice; and, sure enough, when he entered the room he saw the ex-Communist seated beside Rosalie, and making her merry with his sallies. M. Marsault and old Benot were present, too, and as happy as grigs. They had all been lunching pleasantly, and were now taking coffee.

"Oh, M. Ledoux, I am so sorry! M. Bougeard came in with papa almost immediately you had gone," exclaimed Rosalie, coolly.

"I wish you had sent after me to say so," responded Ledoux, fairly nettled for once.

"Well, never mind; don't be cross and disagreeable, but come and have some coffee," said the damsel, with a witching smile. "M. Bou-

Digitized by Google

[illegible] telling us his adventures [illegible] we have all advised him to come forward as a candidate for the Lower House at the next election in Ville-Aubry."

"Why [illegible] the Liberal candidate at the next election," [illegible] Ledoux [illegible].

"[illegible] you [illegible] M. Bougeard?" [illegible] Rosalie.

"But why should I do so?" said Pascal.

"Because I ask you," replied Rosalie, sweetly.

The [illegible] made no reply, but sat down gloomily and [illegible] his coffee, whilst old Marsault, giving him a slap on the thigh, chuckled: "Humour Rosalie, my lad, you'll find it safe play in the end."

II.

To have picked a man out of gaol, to have paid his debts, to have sacrificed half one's nose for him, and then to find in him a rival—this is a fate which must be pronounced hard. Pascal Ledoux was the most long-suffering of men, indulgent in his judgment of others, and slow to take offence; but philanthropy was a hobby which he did not care to ride too hard. We have explained that he was ambitious, and so a consideration for number one formed part of his regular scheme of life. When he discovered that Marius Bougeard was beginning to supplant him in popularity, he thought the time had come for asserting himself as he had never done before. The gallant Marius had gone to live with his uncle; a public banquet had been given him in Ville-Aubry; the mayor had kissed him on both cheeks; and a deputation of working men had presented him with a memorial begging that he would come forward as a representative of the Radical democracy on the first parliamentary vacancy. A vacancy opportunely occurred soon afterwards, and Marius launched his addresses on scarlet paper; Pascal Ledoux retaliated by issuing some of his own on pink. He and the ex-Communist had by that time ceased to be on speaking terms. They bowed when they met—that was all.

The Liberals of the town organised a committee, which sat to adjudicate upon the merits of the two candidates, and Pascal Ledoux was summoned to appear before it. To his anger and mortification, he was told that, in order to prevent the loss of a seat to the Liberals, he ought to retire in the ex-Communist's favour. All the arguments which he could adduce to the contrary were listened to with disapproval.

"But I won't retire!" he exclaimed at length. "The man is a scamp: why should I make way for him?"

"How can you call him a scamp, since you fought to prove that he was an honourable man?"

"And made countless speeches to persuade us all of the same thing."

"Brother Ledoux's personal ambition seems to be carrying him away

Digitized by Google

into forgetfulness of old friends," remarked the president of the Liberal committee, sternly.

"That man is not a friend of mine," shouted Ledoux, beside himself. "I deplore my folly in wasting a nose for him: I regret the speeches I made: I will never again make such a dolt of myself as I did on this Amnesty question."

Having said this, Ledoux resolved to push on his candidature, hap what might; but the consequence was that the next time he went to call on Rosalie, access to her presence was denied him, though he had the mortification of perceiving his rival's—Marius's—overcoat and umbrella in the front hall. M. Marsault, however, on hearing his voice, came out and begged him to walk into his study. Here the two had a scene: "I am sorry for your sake, Ledoux, that you should persist in thwarting my daughter's wishes," said the notary, "for this naturally makes her doubt the sincerity of your affection."

"So it seems I can only prove my affection by making way on all occasions for a rival, who is no doubt trying to steal Mdlle. Rosalie's heart from me!" exclaimed Pascal, bitterly.

"If you are losing my daughter's heart, it is assuredly your own fault, for you know what an interest she takes in this poor young fellow, who has suffered so much."

"And you think this interest proper? Perhaps you desire that Marius Bougeard should become your son-in-law, M. Marsault. Are you sure that you are not desiring to break off with me from inability to pay that dower of three hundred thousand francs which you promised me on the day when I married your daughter?"

"M. Ledoux, if you were going to marry my daughter simply for her money, you are not the man I took you for," observed M. Marsault, loftily. "I wish you a good-morning."

During the days that followed this tiff, poor Ledoux was the unhappiest man in France. He really loved Rosalie Marsault, despite her capriciousness; and he had founded no small hopes on the dower which he was to have obtained with her. It seemed now as though all his prospects were going to crumble down together. Wifeless, dowerless, noseless, and, so far as Parliament was concerned, seatless perhaps, what should he do in the future by way of fulfilling his ambitious dreams? He would have to go to work again drudgingly at the Bar, mastering dull briefs, and drawing small fees on account of them. This was hard lines, as a result of his spirited and self-denying advocacy on behalf of a prisoner, and the musing over it almost made Pascal weep.

But there was a general cry for "Amnesty" at that moment among all the noisiest sections of the French community, and a man who had been amnestied, like Marius, was naturally more interesting than one who had always kept the even tenour of his way like Pascal. The latter saw that every man's face was growing cold to him, now that he had lifted up his heel against a popular favourite; and even his kind act in

Digitized by Google

paying Marius's debts was somehow twisted into a cause of reproach against him; for people said that he had received a sum of money in trust for the payment of Bougeard's debts, and had appropriated the greater part of it to his own uses. This ridiculous rumour actually reached the ears of the Disciplinary Council of the Order of Advocates, whose president, old M. Lesage, sent for Pascal, and administered a paternal warning. "It seems," he said, "that Marius Bougeard is going about, saying that you swindled him. Of course, no sensible man believes him; but the world is composed largely of fools, and this ought to make you careful how you mix yourself up with the concerns of rapscallions."

"What do you advise me to do?" asked Pascal Ledoux, with one of his doleful snuffles.

"You can do nothing except explain to me at whose instigation you paid Marius's debts?"

"At nobody's. I wanted to whitewash the fellow, that's all."

"But you expected to be repaid, I suppose; and as people are generally loth to believe in Quixotry where money matters are concerned, a good many will think you speculated on this rascal's distress."

"Well, I'll go off now and challenge him for telling lies about me," snivelled Pascal.

"That is the very last thing you must do, or it will be thought that you wanted to kill a creditor, which is a proceeding not sanctioned by any code of honour."

"Well, this is a wicked world, M. Lesage," remarked Pascal, dismally.

"It's an odd one," responded the old lawyer, "and you are an odd fellow not to have picked up a greater experience of it."

Pascal Ledoux went home meditating on these words, and he felt exceeding sorrowful. The day of election was at hand, and it was being rumoured through the town that if Marius succeeded in getting returned he would marry Mdlle. Rosalie Marsault. Old Benot was said to be taking the greatest interest in the election, paying for advertisements, placards, and so forth, and attending all the banquets at which his nephew Marius was to speak. This imprudent addiction to conviviality ended by telling upon a man of his age, and on the night before the election he fell seriously ill. M. Marsault at once hurried to his house, but found, to his surprise, that two other lawyers had already been sent for, one of them being M. Lesage. These items of intelligence were brought to Pascal Ledoux in the evening by no less a person than the chief of the local police, who added that he had a matter of importance to communicate to M. Ledoux's ear alone. "It is one which may affect the result of to-morrow's election," said he; and he explained that he was in possession of documents which proved that Marius had not only committed a murder during the Commune, but one of a peculiarly base sort, and for private motives wherewith politics had nothing to do.

Digitized by Google

"What does it matter since the man is amnestied?" responded Ledoux, indifferently.

"But if these facts were known to the electors they would never return him. Speak the word, M. Ledoux, and I hand over all these documents to you, so that you can have them printed and circulated by to-morrow."

"I am not in the least tempted to do it," answered Ledoux. "To begin with, it would look like unfair fighting; and in the next place I am well content that Ville-Aubry should elect this rogue and then find out his antecedents afterwards. That will read them a nice lesson."

"As you please, sir," said the chief of the police. "I think, however, I shall call on M. Benot."

"Oh, no, that would be of no use. Proofs ten times more cogent would not convince *him*. He wants to remain the uncle of a hero."

So there the interview ended, and Pascal Ledoux went to bed that night feeling serener than he had done for some time past. He was conscious of a real superiority over his antagonist now that he had spared him.

The next day the election took place, and the men of Ville-Aubry went forth to poll in melancholy files, quite tranquilly, as the French custom is. There were plenty of coloured posters on the street walls, but no crowding or confusion on the footways. Into the ballot-boxes the electors dropped their ballot-papers mysteriously, and it was only by the talk current in cafés that one could prognosticate how the election was likely to turn. A great many who were known to be Conservatives avowed having voted for the man of their party—a wealthy land-owning Count Desécus—while the mass of Republicans talked as if they had voted for Marius Bougeard. Hardly a man could be found who spoke of having voted for poor Pascal Ledoux.

The poll closed at six, and the votes were quickly counted up at the mairie and other voting stalls. Half an hour afterwards vague rumours began to circulate of Ledoux having polled more votes than had been expected. The throng of noisy supporters that had been escorting the ex-Communist about the town all day, and had now come to anchor with him in a café, began to thin off suspiciously. At the end of another half-hour, a new rumour, more disquieting than the first, caused them to disappear altogether. Marius Bougeard, growing uneasy, but not liking to show it, waited alone in the café to hear the result of the election, which was at last brought him by a newsboy. It was such as to make him stagger:—

NUMBER OF VOTERS, 10,020.

PASCAL LEDOUX . . .	7,250
Count DESÉCUS . . .	2,000
MARIUS BOUGEARD . .	270

Digitized by Google

VII.

When the glad tidings were brought to Pascal Ledoux by old M. Lesage, he was of course a long time before he could realise them.

"What does this mean?" he asked, in stupefaction. "Why, yesterday I seemed to have not a friend."

"It means simply that public opinion in France is a coward," answered M. Lesage. "There is an agitation abroad among turbulent folks in favour of an amnesty, and orderly people are afraid to oppose it by word of mouth; but send them to vote, and you soon see how hollow is the sympathy in favour of revolutionary cut-throats."

"Well, then, it's a better world than it looks," whimpered Ledoux, passing his handkerchief over his fragment of nose.

"Yes, it is; for I have another good piece of news for you," continued M. Lesage. "Old Benot died this afternoon, and he has made you his heir. His eyes were opened to the villany of his nephew before he died, and he heard also through different quarters how magnanimously you had behaved to the scapegrace. Thus 'all's well that ends well.'"

Matters were not yet quite ended though, for Pascal Ledoux had still to make his peace with Rosalie and to marry her. One is happy to say that, after a little while, he contrived to do both without much difficulty. He had a powerful ally in M. Marsault, who had every reason for being civil to old Benot's heir; and perhaps, too, in the girl's own heart, for Marius Bougeard ceased to be a very interesting creature when the sunshine of fortune had been withdrawn from him. He hastened to make his exit from Ville-Aubry after his defeat and subsequent exposure, and was last heard of in Russia, trying to promote Nihilist principles among some policemen, who, if reports were true, were conducting him to Siberia.

As for Pascal Ledoux, he has since his marriage become a wiser man. He sometimes reflects with chagrin that he had to pay for his Quixotry on a scamp's behalf with part of his nose; but some of us buy our experience of life much dearer than that, and so our friend Pascal has food for consolation.

Digitized by Google

How a Chinese B.A. was won.

About two centuries before the time of Abraham, the emperor who then sat upon the throne of China ordained that triennial examinations should be held among the officials of the empire, in order that the "unworthy might be degraded and the meritorious promoted to honour." The plan answered excellently well, we are told, and would probably have thenceforth become a recognised part of the machinery of government, had not evil times fallen upon the country. The peace which reigned as long as the virtuous sovereigns Shun and Yu (B.C. 2255–2197) occupied the throne, disappeared with the death of Yu, and disorder spread like a flood over the empire. In the council-chambers of the succeeding emperors, armed warriors took the place of the learned scholars who had advised their predecessors, and no examination, but such as would have tried the strength of their right arms and their skill in warlike fence, would have found favour with these soldiers of fortune for an instant.

Thus, though at intervals the nation returned to its right mind under the guidance of wise and beneficent rulers, the scheme inaugurated by Shun fell into abeyance, and it was not until nearly three thousand years later that Yang-te (A.D. 605–617) varied the monotony of his otherwise profligate reign by re-instituting a system of examination for office. Unlike everything European, and therefore thoroughly Chinese, the highest degree was instituted first, and the lowest last. Yang-te, like Shun, began by examinations among his courtiers. His successors, arguing that what was good for the courtiers would be good for the people at large, ordained that "search should be made each year in every prefecture and district for elegant scholars and dutiful sons," who should, after satisfying the examiners, be employed in the State.

In this way were called into being the three degrees which exist at the present day, viz. the Siu-ts'ai, or Elegant Scholar; the Keu-jin, otherwise Heaou-leen, or Dutiful Son; and Tsin-sze, the earlier creation of Yang-te. The same books also upon which it was ordained that the candidates should be examined eleven hundred years ago, are still used for the like purpose. But as with advancing culture the number of competitors multiplied exceedingly, it became obviously impossible that offices should be found for all those who were successful; and the contests, especially for the lowest degree of Siu-ts'ai, soon ceased to be for anything more than the honour of the degree. Those who succeed in becoming Tsin-sze are, as a general rule, appointed at once to the mandarinate, and a Keu-jin who has influence in high quarters generally gets employment, but the degree of Siu-ts'ai does nothing more than

Digitized by Google

qualify the holder for official life. Unfortunately for the chances of these pass-men, the practice of drawing all officials from the *literati* has fallen into desuetude; and to such an extent has this departure from ancient custom been carried that nearly one-half of the mandarins of the present day have, it is said, never faced the examiners. Still the competitive examinations form the only officially recognised road to the mandarinate, and this alone is enough to keep the examiners' lists full. But, apart from this consideration, the high value which is attached by tradition to literary culture induces every one in whom glimmers the least intellectual light to tempt fortune in the examination hall. The first ambition of every self-made man is that a son may be born to him who will reflect glory on his grey hairs by winning a degree. He feels that his acquired wealth is as nothing to him, so long as his household is without the wearer of a buttoned cap to raise it above the families of the people, and to link it with the inhabitants of yamuns (i.e. official residences).

Such a one was Le Tai, the great salt merchant, who gave the name Le-chia Chwang to the village where he lived. He had begun life in a very small way, having been a junior clerk in the office of a farmer of the salt *gabelle*, to whose business he eventually succeeded. By constant perseverance, and by the help of some well-devised ventures, he gradually accumulated so considerable a fortune, that, when his employer signified his intention of retiring, he was able to pay him down a good round sum for the goodwill of the business, and to set at rest some official cravings which it was necessary to satisfy before he could obtain the Salt Commissioner's seal to his appointment. Fortune had been kind also to him in his domestic relations. The two sons who grew up before him were a double assurance to him that the sacrifices at his tomb would be duly and regularly offered. He had daughters, too, but they satisfied no ambition and dissipated no fear, and he laid, therefore, no great store on their existence. Not that he was an unkind father. On the contrary, he was fond of toying with his little daughters, but his heart was with his sons, Le Taou and Le Ming.

Taou had at an early age developed a taste for the counting-house, and was rapidly becoming as skilled as his father in driving bargains and defrauding the revenue. Ming, on the other hand, had, from his childhood up, displayed a studious bent of mind. When little more than an infant he would stand in the village school with his face to the wall and his hands behind his back, after the recognised fashion, and repeat, without stumbling, the "Three Character Classic" at the top of his voice, heedless of the like shrill utterances of the young Wangs and Changs who, envious of his superior attainments, declaimed in his ears their by no means perfect lessons. From such promising beginnings he made rapid strides in his studies, until, as he now boasts, he could say with Confucius that "at fifteen he bent his mind to learning." Under the guidance of a tutor, whose title to teach consisted only in the fact of his having, after many ineffectual efforts, taken the lowest degree of Siu-ts'ai

Digitized by Google

some twenty years before, he made himself master of the "Five Classics" and "Four Books," and could talk with equal fluency on the eight diagrams of Fuh-he, the doctrine of the "Superior Man," and the excellencies of the "Mother of Mencius." His acquaintance with the interpretations put upon these texts by every scholar, from K'ung Ying-ta to Yuen Yuen, was profound; and his knowledge of rites and ceremonies was such as to put to shame his less cultured father and brother. His scrupulous attention to every deferential observance inculcated in the rites of Chow proclaimed him a scholar, but marked him in their minds as a prig. He was not a lively companion, for his studies, instead of making him think or rousing his imagination, had only stored his mind with philosophical platitudes and well-worn truisms. But as the accumulation of a good stock of these was essential to enable him to pass the examination which would make him a possible mandarin, his friends put up with his references to Confucius and the other sages, and allowed themselves to be bored to death with his odes and essays. It was quite a relief to them, however, when, as the examination drew near, he betook himself to a summer-house in the garden, whither he carried his books and "the four precious things" of a scholar's study, viz. pencil, paper, ink, and inkslab. Here he spent his days and a great part of his nights in learning by heart the nine classics, laboriously conning the commentaries, and getting up the contents of the rhyming dictionaries. Once or twice he allowed himself to be enticed by his quondam schoolfellows, Wang and Chang, who also hoped to face the Literary Chancellor, into a pic-nic up the river to a Buddhist monastery embosomed in trees among the mountains. On these occasions the friends, as became scholars, lightened their feast by making couplets, and as he who failed in his task had to drink three cups of wine, it not unfrequently happened that Ming was, on the morning after such expeditions, more fit for his bed than his books. When he declared his intention of giving up these merry-makings as interfering with his work, his friends laughed at him, and confided to him their intention of smuggling "sleeve" editions of the classics into the examination hall, plaited in their queues, and advised him to do the same. But Ming, though inclined at first to yield to the temptation, refused, and went back to his summer-house and his books. From these nothing now withdrew him, not even the artifices of Kin Leen, the pretty waiting-maid of Miss Ling next door, who one day threw over the wall, so as to fall in front of his study window, a stone with a bit of paper tied to it. Ming picked it up, and found the paper to contain a couplet, which it did not require his deep reading to discover was an invitation to him to take the reverse direction of the stone. But he crunched the note in his hand, and buried his face in the "Book of Changes."

But soon the time came when he thought himself ripe for examination for the degree of Siu-ts'ai; so one morning he presented himself at the Le-fang department of the magistrate's yamun in the neighbouring

Digitized by Google

city and demanded of the secretary in charge the conditions under which he could appear at the next ordeal. "First of all," said the secretary, who was not in a good humour that morning, "if you are the son of an actor, a prostitute, or a servant, it is no use your coming, for such people are not allowed to compete at all. But if you are not, you must send us in, in writing, your name and age, your place of residence, the names of your father, your mother, your grandfather and grandmother, your great-grandfather and great-grandmother. And further, you must give us a description of your appearance, the colour of your complexion, and whether you have any hair on your face. And now I must attend to my other business."

Acting on this hint, Ming made his bow, and as soon as he got home he sat down to supply the information required of him. He had some difficulty in going as far back as his great-grandparents, and when he came to the question of the colour of his complexion he hesitated, and would have liked to describe it as white, but after consulting the glass he saw the truth was too obvious, so he wrote "yellow." Armed with this paper, he returned to the yamun, and when it had been examined and pronounced satisfactory, he was allowed to take away a packet of examination paper. Each morning after this he walked into the city and past the yamun in the hope of seeing the official notice fixing the date of the next examination. At last, one day, as he turned the corner of the principal street, he saw a crowd at the yamun gate, standing before a fresh placard. In his excitement he forgot for a moment the Confucian maxim never to walk quickly, and he had almost broken into a run before the recollection of the words of the sage steadied his pace. As he came up, Wang met him with a face full of excitement: "His Honour has appointed the 5th of next month," said he; "so we have now got ten more days for work, and as I have been rather idle of late I shall go straight home and make up for lost time."

Ming scarcely heard what he said, but pushed into the crowd to read for himself the notification. True enough, it was as Wang had reported. The 5th was to be the day, and full of his tidings Ming went home to give the news to his parents. From that time he was treated with the consideration due to one who is about to take his first great step in life, and, as the excitement prevented his working, he spent most of his time in visiting those of his friends who were to be among his competitors, and talking over with them their respective chances. One thing filled him with alarm. As the day drew near he learned that he was to be one of upwards of two thousand competitors for forty degrees.

Daylight on the 5th saw crowds of students on their way to the Kaou-pung-tsze, or examination hall, in the magistrate's yamun. As soon as they had all assembled the doors were thrown open at the upper end of the hall, and the magistrate entered and seated himself at a table covered with red cloth, on which were ranged pencils, inkstones, and paper, and at which also sat the secretaries who were to assist in the examination.

Digitized by Google

Presently, amid a death-like silence, a notice-board was displayed, on which it was announced that the work for the day would consist of an essay on the passage from the Lun-yu: "The Master said, 'Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?'" another essay on the passage, also from the Lun-yu: "A youth should overflow with love for all men," and a poem on "Wine," after the manner of the poets of the T'ang dynasty.

Instantly two thousand pencils were seized by as many nervous and eager hands, and the work of the day began. Fortunately for Ming, the commentator's remarks on the first passage were tolerably fresh in his recollection, so that he was able to start off without delay. "Learning," he wrote, "is only the first step towards perfection, and he who desires to become a superior man must strive daily to improve his knowledge and perfect his understanding. But the Master's words have also a wider signification. They are intended to impress upon us that in every concern we undertake we must not only begin, but must also make an end. It is better not to begin a matter than, having begun, to leave it unfinished. But let us further consider this text. It is with the whole body that we pursue after an object, but it is with the heart that we accomplish it. Let us therefore try to keep our hearts pure and our intentions sincere, and we shall then be able to do great things. But how are we to keep our hearts pure?" And then he went on with some very excellent Confucianism to answer his own question, and brought his essay to a conclusion with a eulogy on the supreme wisdom of the text.

Flushed with his first success, he took up his second paper; but his views, or rather those he had imbibed from the commentators Choo He, Ch'ing Haou, and others, were not so clearly defined on the love with which a youth should regard all men, as on the first text. However, he began: "In this passage it is important to bear in mind the distinction the Master would draw between the love of a youth and the love of a full-grown man. A youth brought up within his father's house has no experience of the world, and has not arrived at that knowledge when it is safe for him to hate as a man should hate, or love as a man should love. The Master said that he hated those who spoke evil of others, those who slandered their superiors, and those who were forward and violent, and, at the same time, of contracted understanding. It is fitting, therefore, that men should rightly hate as well as rightly love. But how can a youth who is still unlearned decide for himself whom to love and whom to hate? Therefore the Master says he should love all men." Here his memory failed him, and, as he was incapable of any original thought, he would have had to lay down his pencil had it not occurred to him that he might drag into his essay a panegyric on the love of children for their parents. The idea was a happy one, and enabled him to complete the required number of lines before poor Wang, who sat near him, had done much more than write down the text.

Digitized by Google

But the poem he felt to be a more serious matter than either of the essays. Fortunately the subject was one upon which his favourite author Le Tai-pih had repeatedly written, and, finding that he had still plenty of time before him, he shut his eyes and tried to recall to his recollection the praises which that great wine-loving poet had lavished on the bottle. Gradually his memory summoned up lines and parts of lines, and conventional expressions in sufficient quantity to enable him to begin the mosaic which he was fully aware must make up any poetical effusion on his part. After much "ploughing with the pencil," and long mental struggles, he wrote as follows:

When o'er the village shines the evening sun,
And silent stand the tombs of bygone men,
When birds sing evening chant beside the way,
Then sit you down to drink your perfumed wine.
The men of old did quickly pass the flask,
And sharp of wit did improvise their songs,
Then youths were only bidden to the feasts,
Who drained their goblets to the latest drop.

With this final effort his work for the day was over, and he returned home with the happy consciousness that he had done well. For the benefit of his anxious friends he had to fight his mental battle o'er again, and he retired to bed to dream of honours lost and won; and just as he imagined himself introduced into the imperial presence as *Chwang-yuen*, or first literate of the year, he was roused by his father, who came to tell him that the morning was breaking, and that it was time to be up and stirring. The sun had scarcely risen on the earth when he found himself once again in the examination hall surrounded by his fellow-competitors of yesterday. Again the magistrate took his seat at the table, and without further preface it was announced that the work for that day, which would be the last of that examination, would consist of three essays: one on the passage from the Le Ke: "Tsze-shang's mother died, and he did not mourn for her. His father's disciples therefore asked of Tsze-sze, 'In bygone days did not Confucius mourn for his divorced mother?'" Another on the text from the Classic of Filial Piety: "The Master said, 'Formerly the intelligent kings served their fathers with filial piety, and therefore they served heaven with intelligence; they served their mothers with filial piety, and therefore they served earth with discrimination.'" And a third upon the passage from the Single or Mental Philosophy of Choo He: "Water belongs to the female principle of nature, yet it has its root in the male; fire belongs to the male principle, yet it has its root in the female."

By the time the papers were handed in Ming felt that he had written three fairly good essays. On several occasions during the day his attention had been attracted to his next neighbour, an old man whose trembling hand seemed scarcely able to trace the characters he wished to write. His ideas also evidently flowed slowly, and Ming had several times longed to

Digitized by Google

be able to offer him suggestions. How much they were needed was obvious from the unfinished state of the papers the old scholar handed in at the close of the day, and his dejected mien as he left the hall showed that he was painfully conscious of his shortcomings. But, truth to tell, the feeling that he had done well soon drove the recollection of the veteran out of Ming's mind, and he hurried home to satisfy the eager expectancy of his parents with the tale of his exploits. He knew, however, that his success would have to remain problematical until the publication of the lists in two or three days' time; and he wisely determined to give himself the rest which he felt he needed, and not to attempt to read for the second five-day examination, which he knew he would have to face almost immediately if his name should now appear in the charmed circle of successful competitors.

On the third day he went into the city to see if by chance the lists were published, and found the streets thronged by his associates, who had come on the same fruitless errand as himself. As, after midday, there was no hope of his anxieties being set at rest before the morrow, he allowed himself to be tempted by some of his fellow-students to join them in a picnic to a suburban garden, where the pleasure-seekers amused themselves by extemporising couplets and drinking wine among the flowers. Towards evening the fun grew fast and furious, and Ming found it necessary at last to retreat to a secluded summer-house to sleep off the effects of his potations before returning home. His debauch, however, did not prevent his being in the city early the next morning, as it had been reported among the *convives* of the previous evening that the lists would be out soon after daybreak. On entering the gates he was met by a candidate, by whose excited appearance Ming saw at once that his fate was sealed one way or the other. "The lists are out," said his friend, "and my name is in the circle." "I congratulate you," answered Ming, "and may you rise to office and reap emoluments! But where does my name appear?" "I had not time to look," said his friend as he hurried on. With all possible speed Ming made his way to the magistrate's yamun, outside the walls of which he saw an excited crowd gathered round a long strip of paper, covered for the most part with names written perpendicularly, but having at one end a circle composed of the centrifugally written names of those who had passed best. When fairly within sight of the paper which was to resolve his doubts, Ming suddenly felt an inclination to slacken his pace and to look in at the shop-windows. At last, however, he made his way into the crowd, and had just discovered his name in the circle when an acquaintance cried out, "Ah! Le Laou-ye,* I congratulate you. My name is only two from yours. But I am afraid our poor friend Wang is left out in the cold." "I am sorry for that," replied Ming, "but let me congratulate you on your success. Have you heard when the second examination is to be held?" "In two days' time. May you become a *chwang-yuen!*

* A complimentary title equivalent to 'your worship.'

Digitized by Google

Good-by!" "And may you have a seat at the Feast of the Blowing of the Deer!"* replied Ming, as he hurried off homewards to announce his good fortune.

At the news of his son's success the old salt-merchant's joy knew no bounds, and he instantly issued invitations for a feast on the next afternoon in commemoration of the event. In the meantime the house was besieged by friends—more especially poor ones—who came to congratulate Ming, and who exhausted every good wish it was possible to devise for his future happiness and advancement. In the estimation of his mother and sisters his success had already raised him on a pinnacle of fame; and, after their first burst of joy was over, his mother reminded him that a go-between had been to her several times to propose a marriage for him with Miss Yang, the daughter of an ex-prefect living in the neighbourhood; "and now that you are on the fair road to office," added she, "do let me authorise her to open negotiations." "Let us wait until I have made a name for myself by taking my degree," answered her son, "and then I will obey your wishes in that as in all other respects."

In the pleasurable enjoyment of being made much of, the two days' interval passed quickly to Ming, and the morning of the third day found him seated again in the magistrate's hall, surrounded by all his former competitors, with the exception of a few whose names had figured so near the tail of the long straight list that they had recognised the hopelessness of competing any more. The same old man who had excited his compassion at the first examination was there, however, looking excited and nervous. Ming was now the more sorry for him, as he had recognised his name almost last upon the list; but the entrance of the magistrate presently drove all thoughts but those on the subjects before him out of his head. This examination, it was announced, was, as usual, to last five days. The course on each of the first four days was to consist of an essay on a text taken from the Four Books, as well as of a poem. On the third day an ode on a given subject was to be optional, and on the fourth day an opportunity was promised to aspiring candidates of writing additional poems. On the fifth day the work was to consist only of half an essay on a theme from the Four Books.

At this examination Ming worked with varying success. His profound knowledge of the classics and the writings of the commentators stood him in good stead, and his constant study of the T'ang dynasty poets was amply rewarded by the way in which they honoured his drafts on them to meet his poverty of ideas. The ode on the third day, which was "On the Pleasure Men take in talking of the Signs of the Seasons," exercised his imagination to the utmost. Thrice he put pencil to paper, and as often he tore to shreds his lines. The fourth time he wrote as follows, and, as the hour of closing was drawing near, he handed the result in with his other compositions:—

* A feast given to the graduates at the provincial examinations.

Digitized by Google

When the belated guest his host reseeks,
And cloudless skies proclaim the close of day,
'Tis sweet to talk of treacherous weather past,
And watch the dying sun's effulgent ray.

Ming was no poet, but even he felt that his lines lacked freshness of ideas and vigour of diction. He was conscious, however, of having made one or two happy turns in the rhymes, which, truth to tell, were borrowed from some old published examination papers; but, knowing the somewhat pedantic literary taste of the magistrate, he founded some hopes upon them. And he was right. After a few days of suspense his name appeared on the walls of the yamun, high up in the list of successful candidates. Again the rejoicings at Le-chia Chwang were repeated, and again congratulations poured in upon him from all sides. Even the ex-prefect, upon whose daughter Mrs. Le was keeping her eye, deemed the occasion of sufficient importance to warrant a note, which he sent, accompanied with a red-lacquer tray full of dainty dishes and luscious sweets, some of which Mrs. Le shrewdly suspected had been prepared by the delicate fingers of Miss Yang. This was the most gratifying recognition that Ming had as yet received, and he took the letter from the servant reverentially in both hands. Eagerly he tore open the envelope, and read as follows:—

"In ancient times men's merits were judged by the speed with which they chased a deer, the fleetest of foot winning the prize. But now the way to fame is bridged by learning, and for many years it has been my fate to speed and bid farewell to old friends like yourself, who fly on the wings of success to the capital. Of all the batches of brilliant scholars who have ever passed at these examinations I hear that that to which you have lent your countenance, and which has now entered the epidendrum city * of the learned, is the most conspicuous. Humbly I offer you the paltry things which with this letter I lay at your feet, and respectfully long for the sound of the gold fastening of your response."

Scarcely had Ming replied to this flattering epistle when a messenger arrived with an invitation from the magistrate to dinner on the following day. As it was in accordance with immemorial usage that the successful candidates should be entertained by the magistrate, this summons was no surprise to so keen a student of rites and ceremonies as Ming; and on the next afternoon he went in a sedan-chair to the yamun, fully prepared for the company he found assembled there. But he was much flattered by the way in which the magistrate received him. "Your honourable essays are genuine pearls of literature," said his host; "and you are possessed of a bellyful of classical knowledge, which cannot but gain you admittance to the Dragon [i.e. imperial] presence." "Your honour overrates the mean pencil-scratchings of this

* I.e. the joyous company.

Digitized by Google

dullard, and allows the reflection of your lofty genius to brighten the inelegancies of his wretched compositions," replied Ming. This speech he had carefully prepared as he came along in his chair, on the chance of his having to reply to a complimentary greeting. His fellow-students, however, being unaware of his forethought, sang aloud their praises of his readiness as they sat down to the feast. Before starting, Mrs. Le had strictly enjoined Ming to bring back an account of the good things he was to partake of, and in obedience to her orders he stored his memory with the following list of dishes:—

Bêche de mer; stewed duck, served with force-meat; birds'-nest soup; hashed pigeon, with ham; stewed crabs; fried black fish; stewed mutton, with bamboo shoots; fowl and ham; turtle-soup; hashed dog; stewed black cat; fried rat; macaroni soup; salt fish; salted eggs; minced pork; basins of rice; and an infinite variety of fruits and sweets.

Before beginning, the magistrate poured out a libation, and without more ado the guests set to work at the good things before them. The wine circulated freely, and lent material aid to the magistrate in his endeavours to set every one at his ease. To Ming the magistrate showed marked attention, and with his own chopsticks carried a fine slug from the dish to the lips of the favoured guest, a compliment which made quite a stir among the other scholars. Not far from Ming, but apart from every one, sat the old student whom he had noticed in the examination hall, but whose want of success scarcely entitled him to a seat at the feast. Some such remark Ming made to the magistrate, who explained that each year a certain number of degrees were given away to plucked old students, and that he was going to recommend his guest for one on this occasion. After dinner Ming made a point of congratulating the old man, who in quavering accents made a pedantically complimentary reply, every word of which was taken from the "Four Books." Wang, Ming noticed, was not among the invited, and the magistrate told him that though there were clever thoughts and much sound reasoning in his essays, yet it was too plain that his knowledge of the texts of the classics and the views of the commentators were not sufficiently thorough to pass him, and that therefore he had been obliged to advise him to come up again next time.

From private sources Ming heard that Wang was sorely disappointed at his want of success, so the next morning he wrote him the following note of condolence:—"The decayed willows on the Sin-ting Pass sent forth a sweet savour, and rotten T'ung trees delighted Tsai Yung* with their melody. If a jewel be encased in a hidden casket, it is not every

* A celebrated scholar and musician of the second century. It is recorded of him that while seated at the fireside of a friend in the State of Wu, his attention was attracted to the sounds emitted from a log of a T'ung tree which was burning on the hearth, and declaring that its tone gave promise of rare excellence, he converted it into a lute.

Digitized by Google

sword which can cleave it so as to display the jewels * found by Pien Ho on the King mountain or the pearls snatched by the Earl Suy from the serpent's head. Who can explain the lofty talents enjoyed by some, or account for the meaner abilities bestowed on others? We are as we are made, and there is no helping ourselves." To this kindly epistle Wang sent reply:—

"Well may I adopt the lines of Chang Shu as my chant—

A thousand miles o'er sea and fields
I have followed at your horse's heels;
I have travelled over hill and dale,
And now have missed the Dragon's scale.†

Gratefully I acknowledge your sympathising words, in which I recognise the lofty nature which has enabled you to overcome all the difficulties in your path. Though incapable through grief to write, I fear to return you a verbal message. As night approaches my sorrow almost seems to weigh me down, and I wrap myself in a cattle cloak, after the manner of Wang Chang,‡ and weep bitter tears. What else is left for me to do?"

Ming knew that he would now have a respite of two or three months before the time came for him to be examined by the prefect, as a preliminary to his going up for his final examinations before the Literary Chancellor. He retired therefore again to his summer-house, and devoted himself to a renewed study of the books which had already served him so well. As the day drew near, his father wrote to an old friend at the prefectural city, asking him to receive his son for the examination, and, in response to a cordial invitation which was returned, Ming mounted his mule one morning at daybreak, and started off on his momentous journey. Late in the evening he reached the hospitable door of his father's friend, and woke the next morning, after a sound sleep, refreshed and ready for the work before him. After eating a hasty breakfast, he hurried off to the yamun of the Literary Chancellor, and arrived only just in time, for he had scarcely got into the hall when the gun went off which was the signal for the closing of the doors. The arrangements he found to be in all respects similar to those at the magistrate's yamun, and the subjects for examination were taken from the same books, the only difference being that the prefect's more liberal mind was reflected in the texts he chose for the essays. With each of

* A block of jade which, being believed to be spurious was rejected by two emperors in succession, the last of whom condemned Pien Ho (eighth century B.C.) to lose his left foot as an impostor. The next emperor, however, perceiving the genuineness of the stone, graciously accepted it, and offered Pien Ho a title of nobility, which he declined.

† I.e. "And now have missed taking my degree." The idea, a poetical one, being that a successful scholar resembles a soaring dragon.

‡ A well-known character, who, after enduring great poverty, afterwards became a metropolitan magistrate.

Digitized by Google

his five days' work Ming was fairly satisfied, and when the examination was over he waited with some acquired confidence the publication of the result. The appearance of his name, however, in the first flight of successful competitors, was none the less a delight to him, and he sent off an express messenger to Le-chia Chwang to proclaim his success to his parents. "Your stupid son," he added, "is but waiting to obey the invitation sent him by his Excellency the Prefect to dinner to-morrow before hastening to your honourable dwelling to throw himself at your feet." The dinner at the prefect's was very much a repetition of that given by the magistrate, except that there was a marked weeding out in point of numbers. The reputation which Ming had brought with him for scholarship, and which he had just maintained, insured him friendly notice at the hand of the prefect, who, however, did not seem much to relish his stilted style of conversation and his Confucius-or-nothing train of thought. Before the students parted their host announced that, as usual, he should send the seat numbers and not the names of the successful competitors to the Literary Chancellor, who would hold the final examinations on that day month in that city.

The next day Ming went home, and was met at the entrance of the village by a number of his associates, who greeted him with cries of congratulation. The welcome he received from his immediate family was especially joyous, and for days a succession of visitors poured in upon him to offer their felicitations on his marked and sustained success. Under such agreeable circumstances he took little heed of time, and almost before Ming was aware he was reminded that it was time he again betook himself to the prefectural city. The merchant who had been his host on the previous occasion was glad enough once more to open his doors to a scholar who was already winning for himself eminence; and though he cared little for his companionship, preferring lively and suggestive conversation to dull platitudes and measured periods, he paid him marked deference, as to one to whom the door of office, the highest object of ambition, would soon be opened.

The ordeal Ming was now called upon to face was more terrible to him than any of the other examinations had been. Up to this time he had presented himself only before the local officials, men whom he had constantly seen, and with whom he was in a sense familiar. Besides, hitherto the contests had been but preliminary, whereas the examinations in which he had now to compete were either to make or mar him, at all events temporarily; and the examiner was surrounded with all the dignity and awe of an unknown great personage. It was with no slight trepidation, therefore, that he took his seat again on stool No. 33, by which number he was known for the time being. As soon as the gun was fired and the door shut, the Chancellor entered. As he approached the table, all rose, and every eye was turned towards the man in whose hands their fate rested. He was of medium height and a plump figure, with a round good-natured face, a pair of small twinkling

Digitized by Google

eyes, and a long scanty moustache. After bowing politely to the students, he seated himself at the table and straightway proclaimed on the notice-board that on this occasion he should require from them two essays on the texts, from the "Four Books": "The Master said, 'It is by the odes that the mind is aroused: it is by the rules of propriety that the character is established; and it is from music that the finish is received.'" And, "When a ruler sympathises in his people's joys, they take pleasure in his rejoicings; and when he shares their sorrows, they sympathise with his griefs." And a poem on the "pleasure of hearing the notes of a distant lute amid the sound of drippings from the roof on a wet day."

Ming was too nervous to collect his thoughts and set his memory at work at once, and it was some time before he put pencil to paper. But when he did, he made fair progress, and at the end of the day he had the satisfaction of knowing that if his essays contained no new or striking thoughts, they were at all events thoroughly orthodox, and that the sentences were framed in accordance with the rules laid down by some of the best-known essayists. He was rather disappointed, therefore, to find, when the list of eighty optimes came out, that "Thirty-three" was barely within the first forty. This was the first check of any kind which he had met with, and it alarmed him; for he gathered from it that the Commissioner did not take the same favourable view of his literary matter and manner as the magistrate and prefect had done. It was with a sobered countenance, therefore, that he took his seat again for the second trial. This time several themes were given out from the "Four Books," upon which the students were expected to compose half essays. To these Ming devoted his best energies, and was rewarded by finding his number published two days later in the circle of successful competitors.

Having recovered some of his confidence from this result, Ming again took his seat in the hall, on the morning after the publication of the lists, with some assurance. The comparatively small number of competitors, which had been reduced to eighty, or just double the number of degrees competed for, by the Chancellor, gave a silent and business-like air to the assembly. On this occasion the candidates wrote an essay on a text from the "Four Books," one on a text from the "Five Classics," and a poem. At the close of the day's work the Commissioner announced that after examining the papers he should, as was customary, write to the prefect for the names of the best men, whom at present he only knew by their numbers, and should at once publish them. "And I have arranged," he added, "that the first competitors from the other districts shall meet you here in ten days' time finally to compete for the degrees." The next few days were spent by Ming in a fever of suspense which the complimentary speeches of his merchant host were quite ineffectual to allay. To fail now, he felt, would be a terrible blow both to his fortunes and his pride. What would all his friends say? and what would, above all, the ex-prefect Yang say? However, fortune was kinder to him than his fore-

Digitized by Google

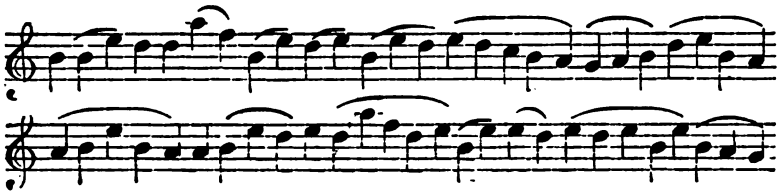
bodings, and once again he saw with triumph his name among the number of the successful. On this occasion his pleasure was all the greater, since he felt that now he was practically sure of his degree. The final examination spoken of by the Commissioner would, he knew, consist only of a test of his knowledge of the text of the sixteen "Sacred Edicts" of the Emperor K'ang-he, and of "the Amplification" of the same by his son and successor, Yung-Ching. On this point he felt that he could trust his memory to carry him through, for had he not in his study at Le-chia Chwang repeated them over and over again by heart without missing a character? However, to make assurance doubly sure, he devoted some hours of each of the succeeding days to conning them over. On the appointed morning at daybreak he made his way to the Chancellor's hall, where he found assembled his fellow pass-men, together with the picked competitors from the other four districts of the prefecture. There was a semi-holiday air about them all, as though they looked on this trial more as a formality than anything else. The Commissioner, too, entered the hall with a lighter step, and his voice had a cheery tone in it as he ordered the announcement to be made that the morning's work would consist of writing out from memory the seventh edict of the Beneficent Emperor K'ang-he, beginning "Chu e twan," "Flee strange doctrines," with the "Amplification" of the same by his august and intelligent son Yung-Ching.

Fortunately for Ming this particular edict had been frequently in evidence lately at Le-chia Chwang with reference to the foreign missionary question, which was beginning to disturb that otherwise quiet district. The passage in the "Amplification," *yew joo se-yang keaou tsung T'ien chu, yih shuh puh king*—"As to the religion of the Western foreigner which exalts the Lord of Heaven, it is also contrary to our sacred books," &c.—had been constantly quoted in opposition to the proselytising zeal of the missionaries, and the context had been carefully studied by village Confucianists. His task was therefore a comparatively light one, and, when he put down his pencil, he felt assured that he had not missed one of the six hundred and forty characters composing the extract. Shortly after noon he walked into his host's family hall, and with so jaunty a step that it needed no words of his to assure his entertainer that he was speaking to a Siu-ts'ai almost *in esse*. It now only remained for him to await the public notification of the final result of the series of examinations which he had gone through during the last two months. On the third day this was published, and the local world was made acquainted with the fact that Le Ming, together with thirty-nine others from the same district, had obtained the degree of Siu-ts'ai. As soon as Ming had despatched a letter with the news to his father, and received the congratulations of his merchant host, he hurried off to one of the first tailors in the city to order the canonicals belonging to his newly acquired honour.

The next day, as in duty bound, the newly made Siu-t'sais went at

Digitized by Google

the recognised hour to pay their respects to the Chancellor, who received them graciously, and entertained them on tea and sweets, while a band in the courtyard enlivened the company with inspiriting music. Ming was not musical, but even he could not help recognising that well-known and deservedly popular air, "The Autumn Tints stretch across the Sky," and when the musicians struck up the first bars—



he could not resist humming to himself the picturesque refrain :

"Yaou loh ch'iu t'ung,
Ngai nan chih hwei tsui,
Yuen k'e tsan t'ung,
Han chang shuy k'e kung chwang t'un."

There was one more prescribed ceremony to be gone through before he could return home. On the afternoon following the visit to the Chancellor's the same gay company went to worship at the temple of Confucius, where, after having prostrated themselves before the image of the Sage, they partook of a feast spread in the courtyard at the expense of the city. Towards evening the scene became one of revelry, and the amount of wine consumed as forfeits in the game of Mora sent many of the guests to bed with "very red cheeks" to "get up very white in the morning." When Ming reached his host's, he found his canonicals had arrived from the tailor's, and, tired though he was, he could not resist the pleasure of trying them on. Early dawn saw him again before the looking-glass, and after a hasty breakfast he set off for Le-chia Chwang amid the congratulations and good wishes of the worthy merchant and his family. In the evening he reached his home, and when he walked into the family hall, bearing on his person the insignia of his success, his father fairly wept with delight. Nor were the other members of the family less demonstrative as with one consent they offered their congratulations and expressed their admiration of the becoming and dignified dress which it was now his right to wear. After his mother had carefully examined his silver-buttoned cap surmounted by a silver bird, his robe of blue silk bordered with black, and his girdle with silver pendants, she whispered in his ear, "And now may I speak to the go-between?"

"Yes, now," replied her son.

R. K. D.

Digitized by Google

A Seat in the House.

It is difficult to decide at what date a seat in the House of Commons began to be an object of ambition with gentlemen of easy fortunes. As far as one can judge, it was hardly till the reign of Elizabeth that squires and comfortable tradesmen cared to endure the expense and trouble of serving their country in this fashion. During the first two centuries of our parliamentary life, boroughs often petitioned the Crown that they might be spared the exercise of their privilege of sending representatives to Westminster. At first our Kings were not easily induced to comply with such requests; but as the House of Commons grew to be a power in the State, Royalty began to take a new view of the situation, as did also the nobles. One day the eldest son of an Earl of Bedford stood for Parliament, and was elected—and the House became, as it has since remained, essentially aristocratic in tone; for that it is such must never be forgotten. Lord Palmerston noticed the fact as soon as the first Reformed Parliament met in 1833. "I don't see," he observed, "much difference between this House and the last. In both one finds the same dislike of cant, the same loyalty, the same fondness for precedent, the same maintenance of privilege."

The right to vote for the election of members appears to have always been more keenly appreciated than the right to serve in Parliament; hence our earliest Reform Bill—the Act of 1429—which limited the country suffrage to forty-shilling freeholders. This reform, if such it can be counted, was obviously based on the principles of an earlier one. Under our Norman and Angevin kings, all barons holding their lands directly from the sovereign were summoned to the great council of the realm. As these multiplied with the subdivision of land, the practice was felt to be inconvenient, and gradually the custom became established that none of the barons should repair to Parliament except those summoned by name.

The House of Commons was enlarged by successive monarchs, notably by the Tudors. Mary I. is supposed to be the first of our rulers who understood the benefits of "packing" a House by the creation of fresh seats. Elizabeth created others; as did James I., to whom the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge owe their representation. The Stuarts, however, soon grew wearied of Parliament. James was once to receive a deputation from the House of Commons: "Place twelve chairs round my throne," he said to the Chamberlain; "I am about to receive twelve kings." Charles I.'s idea of constitutional government was, not to create

Digitized by Google

fresh boroughs, but to commit to the Tower members who spoke against the policy of the Court. Sir John Eliot, for this sole offence, died in prison; and England long endured a similar tyranny with nothing more than angry murmurs. Charles II. was the last of our sovereigns who, by his own royal will, conferred on boroughs the right of sending members to Parliament. He exercised this prerogative in two or three cases at the most; but it is worth noting that the prerogative has never been abolished. The Queen could create a hundred new constituencies to-morrow, as she could a hundred peers, without committing an illegal act. Of course such an exercise of power would be unconstitutional; but it ought not to be forgotten that the word "constitution," and the adjectives derivable from it, have no place either in the statute or the common law of England.

It may, nevertheless, be fairly argued that the Act of Union (1707) between England and Scotland does, by implication, limit the royal prerogative in the matter of creating fresh seats. Scotland was then accorded 16 seats in the Lords and 45 in the Commons, obviously on the understanding that the Crown was no more of its own free will to tamper with the representation. The English House of Commons at that time consisted of 513 members; after the union it rose to 550, and so continued till the union with Ireland. The sister kingdom was authorised to send 100 members to the "Imperial" Parliament (so called for the first time), which raised the members to their present normal figure of 650 (*normal* because there are seven seats vacant at this moment through the disfranchisement of constituencies pronounced by judges or committees to be more than usually corrupt).

It is worthy of remark on this head, that England, the dominant nation of the United Kingdom, has been singularly generous towards Scotland and Ireland in the matter of representation. The Reform Bill of 1832 raised the number of Scottish members to 53; that of 1867 to 60. The Irish representatives have likewise been increased in number from 100 to 105. Thus England has cheerfully sacrificed 20 seats, equal to 40 on a division, in order to render "justice," as it is facetiously called, to her presumably aggrieved co-nationalities.

Ireland, however, may still boast a grievance. By the Act of 1800 she was to send, not only 100 members to the Lower House, but 32 to the Upper—viz. 28 lords temporal and 4 spiritual. Mr. Gladstone's Disestablishment Act of 1869 deprived Ireland of her "spiritual representation without giving her an equivalent."

The question of federation between Great Britain and her colonies has often been raised; but one notable difficulty seems to have been generally overlooked. How are the colonies to be represented in the Upper House? The question is only of importance in so far that one may be sure that, *exempli gratia*, Canada would insist on her full rights in this matter. The best solution would probably be to name some life peers from the Canadian Senate, the members of which are appointed by

Digitized by Google

the Governor-General for life. In colonies where the members of the Upper Houses sit for only a term of years, the Imperial representatives in the Lords would have to be elected for a corresponding period. Peers of Scotland, and Lords of Appeal, do not, as such, sit for life—so that no constitutional principle could be violated. Still it must be admitted that the number of the Peers is already large. In any calculations on this subject, India must of course be omitted; for the present she is a dependency of the empire, not an integral part of it.

The history of the relative power of the two Houses is extremely curious. The Lords probably remained the more important Chamber till the reign of Henry VIII.; by the reign of James I. the supremacy of the Commons had certainly been established. Guizot points out that in the reign of Charles I. the collective wealth of the House of Commons was far greater than that of the Lords—a decisive fact. It is a significant circumstance, too, that Hampden's friends in the early part of this reign wished him to ask for a peerage, and that he preferred a seat in the Lower House as giving more influence. A wild scheme entered into the mind of Charles. Having found it impossible to govern altogether without a Parliament, he fancied that he might, at least, suppress the House of Commons: hence the famous convocation of the great council of Peers at York. The Peers came; but declined to act without the concurrence of the third estate. Some ten years later the Commons suppressed them. The Lords, as became them, died with dignity. They adjourned till the morrow. This was early in February, 1649; the morrow was to be in May, 1660. Never perhaps in our history was the House of Commons so detested and despised by the nation as when it ruled alone.

Nevertheless, the prestige of the Lords had suffered a hopeless shock; and though their votes again and again were to prove of distinct historic importance, yet on each occasion it is clear that this was simply because they happened at the moment to reflect more distinctly than the Commons the will of the nation. In the Convention Parliament of 1689 the Earl of Devonshire coolly suggested the adjournment of a debate till the pleasure of the Commons should be known. "By that time," as he put it, "we may get some lights from below." The Peers were deeply offended, the Earl properly rebuked.

The happy thought of packing the House of Lords seems first to have occurred to James II. Churchill objected to Sunderland that the Lords might refuse to pass a Bill. "Oh, silly!" replied the Minister; "your troop of guards shall be sent up to the House of Lords." Anne actually tried the experiment, creating twelve Peers in a day, with the avowed object of carrying through a measure. As the new lords filed in, the Marquis of Wharton sarcastically asked if they meant to vote singly or by their foreman. How William IV. authorised Lord Grey, in writing, to create as many Peers as he pleased, in order to pass the Reform Bill, is known to everybody; but it is not so generally known

Digitized by Google

that Lord Grey's heart failed him at the last moment, or his patrician instincts were too strong. He threatened, but did not mean to act. Had the Peers again thrown out the Bill, he had made up his mind to resign

It is worth noting, that while the Peers do still exercise their privi lege of vetoing the decisions of the national representatives, the Crown has entirely abandoned its power in this respect. Our first constitutional King, as William III. may be fairly called, repeatedly refused his assent to laws approved by the two Houses; but none of his successors ventured to repeat the experiment. One measure that the King peculiarly disliked and twice vetoed was for limiting the duration of Parliaments to three years. Till then a Parliament lasted exactly as long as the King pleased. Charles II. actually kept one for eighteen years. William was much troubled when the Bill was sent up to him the third time; and wrote to Sir William Temple for advice. Sir William advised compliance, and sent his private secretary, "Mr. Swift," to give his reasons in detail. The King was not convinced, though he was much pleased with Swift, and asked the latter "if he would like a troop of horse?"—an offer declined with thanks.

Though the King had meant to veto the Bill once more, he did not. The sudden illness of the Queen, who was soon given over by the physicians, deprived him of all courage for the time, and he shrank from a conflict with the House of Commons. The Bill became law (December, 1694). It was repealed in 1716, when the Septennial Act was passed. It was feared that a general election, in 1717, would have resulted in a Jacobite majority.

The formula for refusing assent to a Bill, should Her Majesty ever care to do so, would be: "La Reine s'avisera."

In these days we associate a seat in the House with all that is pleasant and dignified. It was not always so. Not only did members run the risk of imprisonment from Tudors and Stuarts for their speeches, but they occasionally received strange treatment from their own colleagues. James II. once addressed a scolding speech to his Parliament; the House resolved to take his Majesty's message into consideration. They met in great dejection, being really sorry to have offended the King. One member, who was so incautious as to say, "I hope we shall not be frightened from our duty by a few sharp words," was instantly committed to the Tower. The discipline of the House, too, was severe under the Stuarts. That members should have been forbidden (temp. Jac. I.) to smoke during a debate, or to spit on the floor, is not surprising; but it must have been a real grievance not to be allowed to go to sleep. Henry Marten was once taking a nap, when a dull member called the attention of the House to his offence, and moved that he should be admonished. "Mr. Speaker," quoth Marten, on awaking to the situation, "if we are to take order with the nodders, I move we do likewise with the plodders. (Hear, hear, and laughter.)" A good deal was forgiven to Marten, who indeed was as wise as witty.

Digitized by Google

The privilege of members from arrest is immemorial. With the reign of Charles II. it became a reality. The Court had to seek other methods than the old ones of expressing its displeasure with the Opposition.

Sir John Coventry having used expressions displeasing to the King, the Duke of Monmouth resolved to avenge his father's honour. Sir John was waylaid one night by a gang of ruffians in the Duke's pay, and his nose slit. The House was furious; but there was no evidence against anybody, and it had to content itself with passing the "Coventry" Act, which enacts the severest penalties against persons guilty of similar assaults. However, from that day the Court let members' noses alone. Persuasion was felt to be better than force. Danby did not exactly introduce the practice of bribing members, but he was the Minister who reduced it to a system. The direct bribery of members in hard cash lasted for about a century. Lord Rockingham was the first Prime Minister who refused to bribe. His term of office was remarkably short. The price of a member's vote ranged, under George III., from 200*l.* to 1,000*l.* Mr. Grenville, in asking Lord Saye and Sele, by letter, for his support, enclosed a 200*l.* note. Lord Saye wrote back, promising his vote, but returning the money. The tone of Lord Saye's letter is extremely courteous, with absolutely nothing in it of offended dignity. He merely observes that he has made it a rule never to accept presents of that sort. Mr. Grenville replies by complimenting him on his nice sense of honour.

Tillotson had the courage to remonstrate with William III. against the practice. The King took the lecture in good part, and told the Archbishop he was very sorry, but could not help himself. "There was no other way with those men." It was in that reign that Sir John Trevor, Speaker of the House of Commons, was found guilty of taking a bribe of a thousand guineas to forward a private Bill. He was ordered to move a vote of censure on himself from the chair. Next day he was to have moved his own expulsion from the House. He contrived, however, to be ill on the morrow; and the House good-naturedly accepted the excuse. Danby, who had become Duke of Leeds, was reported by a committee of the Commons to have accepted a gift of 5,000*l.*, under suspicious circumstances; and impeached accordingly. Luckily or unluckily for the Duke, the witness on whom the Commons counted instantly disappeared. The impeachment had to be dropped, but the Duke's reputation was gone. It is characteristic of the age that his Grace, nevertheless, remained President of the Council for some time longer. It was on this occasion, by the way, that the Duke told the Peers that amazing anecdote about himself and Mr. Savile. The Duke, as Treasurer, had once had a lucrative office in his gift. "Mr. Savile came to me and said, 'I don't want the place myself, but tell everybody who asks you for it that I recommended him.' 'What, Harry,' I said, 'tell them all?' 'Why, yes; because then whoever does get it,

Digitized by Google

will be sure to pay me.' So I told every one who came to me: 'Sir, you are much beholden in this matter to Mr. Savile.' And the end was Harry got a handsome present." An equally good story belongs to this period. Under James II., a member was going to vote the wrong way. "Sir," significantly remarked a Minister, "I think you have a place in the Customs?" "Yes," replied the hon. gentleman; "but my brother died yesterday, and left me 700*l.* a year. So I don't care."

To return to the question of the privileges of members, it may be observed that one of them now extinct, that of franking, dated from the commencement of the reign of Charles II. The House conferred the revenues of the Post Office on the Duke of York, or, to put it more exactly, gave his Royal Highness a monopoly of the letter-carrying trade. At the same time they claimed that letters sent by members of either House should go free. One member spoke bitterly against this clause as "pitiful" and contemptible. Was he a rich man?

The privilege of franking was always highly esteemed and abused by patriots of all hues, without the slightest sense of shame. Chief Justice Abbott, on being raised to the peerage, naturally received the congratulations of the Bar. The new Lord (Tenterden), in returning thanks, observed that nothing in his elevation gave him greater pleasure than the privilege of being able to frank the letters of his friends of the lega profession. Members of the junior Bar soon availed themselves of his lordship's kindness in a way that grieved him much. It was not the number of the franks he minded, but the remarkable addresses to which the signature "Tenterden" found itself appended.

A few years later, Macaulay, giving his sister an account of how he spent the day, mentions that he regularly devoted a portion of his time to franking letters. The system was at length abolished in 1840, with the introduction of the penny post. America, however (always a full generation behind us in political progress), still allows her senators and representatives to enjoy perfect immunity from the claims of the revenue in this respect.

A propos of Macaulay, one must never forget that this great man's career was probably helped forward full ten years by the much-reviled system of pocket boroughs. In 1830 he had been known for some years as one of our most brilliant writers; but no "free and independent" constituency had dreamed of sending him to Parliament to represent it, nor had he cherished such a hope, except as a vague possibility of the future. In that year Lord Lansdowne offered him Calne, which he gratefully accepted. Calne has since enjoyed the honour of returning Mr. Lowe to the House. Of pocket seats, the largest number absolutely in the gift of a single person seems to have been eleven—the figure at which the parliamentary influence of the Dukes of Norfolk was to be computed at the close of the last century. The Howards of the ducal line remained themselves excluded from the House for about a century continuously, owing to their adherence to the Church of Rome. At

Digitized by Google

length, in 1780, an Earl of Surrey took the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England, and was straightway returned to Parliament. On the whole, he was a man of patriotism and integrity, but unfortunately lacking in certain social qualities. The Whig leaders were one day discussing who should move the amendment to the Address. Fox finally decided in these words: "Saddle *black* Surrey for the field to-morrow." Surrey might have retorted with a venerable fable about the pot and the kettle.

Stowe had six seats absolutely at its disposal till the Reform Bill, but this number is far from representing the measure of the parliamentary influence wielded by the Grenvilles during two generations. Only second to them in power were the Russells, who, however, lacked talent. Curiously enough, it never seems to have occurred to the second Earl Temple, the then head of the Grenvilles, to put his young cousin, William Pitt, into the House. So Pitt, *ætatis* twenty-two, suggested to the University of Cambridge that it might do itself the honour of send him to St. Stephen's. That learned body declined, not without *hauteur*. It ended in the future Premier being returned by the Lowthers for their borough of Appleby. Two years later, the University had no fault whatever to find with the Right Hon. William Pitt, First Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Universities have rarely been fortunate in their choice of "burgesses," and, when they do get a brilliant man, generally manage to quarrel with him before long. Pitt is, perhaps, a solitary exception. When Peel decided on introducing the Catholic Emancipation Bill, he resigned his seat for Oxford University and stood again. But Oxford would none of him. About the same time Cambridge thrust out Lord Palmerston for the same offence.

In every country but ours members are paid for the discharge of their legislative functions. The American Congress went so far as to raise the salary of representatives only the other day, and a seat in the House is now practically worth 1,000*l.* a year. In England the custom of paying members was never formally abandoned; but, gradually, one borough after another discontinued the practice. Andrew Marvell was the last member salaried by his own constituents—the citizens of Hull. Certainly a more honest politician never lived. Mr. Gladstone has declared himself against the principle of paying members, "but does not see why the proposal should startle us out of our five senses."

One wonders that no prince of the blood has ever canvassed a constituency. There is nothing in the world—at least, nothing in the law—to prevent Prince Leopold from tacking the initials M.P. to his name, if he can get a county or borough to return him, and most of them would probably return a son of the Queen by acclamation. The experiment might be worth trying; though Her Majesty could at any moment cut the matter short by creating the candidate for plebeian honours a Peer, because a peerage is theoretically in the nature of a burden or charge

Digitized by Google

laid on one by the sovereign, and which cannot, therefore, be refused. A royal Clodius, however, might become a very popular personage for a while. He might pathetically lament that, longing to be of the people, he was debarred by royal tyranny from that honour and happiness. He would get plenty of men to believe him.

The number of our Parliaments is about 250. The longest in duration, after Charles II.'s (already referred to), was that emphatically called the Long Parliament. It met on November 3, 1640, and was forcibly dissolved by Cromwell, April 20, 1653. The shortest was that summoned by Henry of Lancaster, in the name of Richard II., for the purpose of deposing that monarch. It lasted one day (September 29, 1399), despatching its business with remarkable punctuality. Another of Henry's Parliaments obtained the name of *Parliamentum Indoctum*, because lawyers were excluded from it. This assembly met at Coventry (1404); as did also, in 1459, the *Parliamentum Diabolicum*, which attainted the followers of the White Rose. Other strange names bestowed on these time-honoured councils are the "*Mad Parliament*," the first in which borough deputies sat; and the "Addled Parliament" (1614), which declined to give James I. as much money as he wanted. Since the commencement of the institution, we have never been more than eleven years without a Parliament; this was, of course, from 1629 to 1640. Another long and sad period of a similar nature was from 1681 to 1685. Since the accession of William and Mary we have never been more than a few weeks without one—the time necessary for the issue of writs for a fresh election and the returning of members; for with us one Parliament cannot be summoned till its predecessor has been dissolved. In America, Congress never dies. Every alternate 4th of March the members elected the previous autumn take their seats; and it is a strange sight, during the last session, to see the coming members watching the retiring ones in the discharge of their duties. They are admitted to the floor of the House, and freely offer advice to their quasi-colleagues, who must feel extremely grateful.

To conclude: a seat in the House cannot be resigned, for the same reason that a peerage, once conferred, cannot be got rid of. But by the statute of 1707 members accepting any office of profit under the Crown vacate their seats (though the holders of certain offices may seek re-election): hence the origin of the Chiltern Hundreds. These Hundreds are Burnham, Desborough, and Stoke, an estate of the Crown on the chain of chalk hills that pass from east to west through the middle of Buckinghamshire, the stewardship whereof is a nominal office, with a salary of twenty shillings, conferred on members of Parliament when they wish to vacate their seats.

Digitized by Google

Captain Ortis' Booty: a Ballad.

Captain Ortis (the tale I tell
Petit told in his chronicle),
Won from Alva, for service and duty,
At Antwerp's surrender the strangest booty.

Then each captain gained—as I hear—
That for guerdon he held most dear,
Chose what in chief he set heart of his on;
Out strode Ortis and claimed—the prison!

Such a tumult! For, be assured,
Greatly the judges and priests demurred;
No mere criminals alone in that Stygian
Darkness died, but the foes of religion.

There lay heretics by the score,
Anabaptists and many more
Hard to catch, but let loose when caught your
Timid squirrels, forego the torture

Never! Suddenly sank the noise;
Alva spoke in his steely voice:
"He's my soldier sans flaw or blemish,
Let him burn as he likes these Flemish!"

"Sire, as you please," the Governor said,
"Only King Philip's edict read——"
Alva spoke! "What is King or Cortes?"
"Open the portals!" cried Captain Ortis.

Digitized by Google

"Loose the prisoners; set them free:
Only—each pays a ransom fee."
Out, be sure, flowed the gold in buckets,
Piles on piles of broad Flanders ducats.

Ay, and there followed not gold alone;
Men and women and children thrown
In chains to perish came out forgiven,
Saw light, friends' faces, and thought it heaven.

Out they staggered, so halt and blind
From rack and darkness they scarce could find
The blessed gate where daughter and mother,
Father and brother, all found each other.

"Freedom! Our darlings! Let God be praised!"
So cried all; then said one amazed,
"Who is he under heaven that gave us
Thought and pity—who cared to save us?"

"Captain Ortis," the answer ran,
"The Spanish lancer. Here's the man.
Ay, but don't kill him with too much caressing;
Death's sour salad with sweetest dressing."

Danger indeed; for never had been
In brave old Antwerp such a scene,
Boldest patriot, fairest woman,
Blessing him, knelt to the Spanish foe-man.

Ortis looted his prize of gold.
And yet I think if the truth be told,
He found, when the ducats were gone with the pleasure,
That heretic blessing a lasting treasure.

Still my Captain, to certain eyes,
Seems war-hardened and worldly-wise;
"'Twere for a hero (you say) more handsome
To give the freedom, nor take the ransom."

Digitized by Google

True; but think of this hero's lot,
No Quixote he, nor Sir Launcelot;
But a needy soldier half-starved, remember,
With cold and hunger, that northern December.

Just such an one as Parma meant,
Writing to Philip in discontent:
"Antwerp must yield to our men ere much longer,
Unless you leave us to die of hunger.

"Wages, raiment, they do without,
Wine—fire even—they'll learn, no doubt,
To live without meat for their mouths; they're zealous,
Only they die first as yet, poor fellows."

Yes and I praise him, for my part,
This man war-beaten and tough of heart,
Who—scheming a booty, no doubt—yet planned it
More like a saint, as I think, than a bandit.

What, my friend, is too coarse for you?
Will nought less than a Galahad do?
Well; far nobler, it seems, your sort is;
But I—I declare for bold Captain Ortis!

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.

Digitized by Google

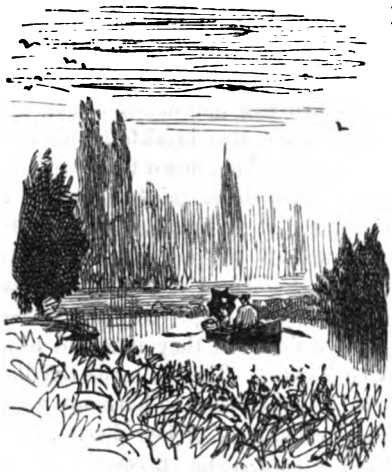
Digitized by Google

HOSSEELY, IT WAS NOT A BRAVEFUL SCENE.

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Austin.

III.



MRS. Leicester troubled herself very little about her match-making. When she happened to observe Mrs. Austin and Mr. South, she thought they seemed to be very good friends; and when they were out of sight, she supposed that they were together somewhere, and getting on nicely. She did not quite know what she would get them for a wedding present, but she determined to run up to town with Frank, and look about her. There were sure to be pretty things in the shops. Meanwhile she was very well satisfied. Frank seemed all right, and, that being so, Mrs. Leicester hardly noticed that, as the days went by, his little cousin was not quite her simple, happy self of a fortnight earlier, and that these two, who had been such allies, were no longer on their old footing.

Gilbert made no attempt to resume the talk which was broken off in the ruined castle. He appeared to have tacitly accepted Mrs. Austin's offer of friendship without explanations; and though from time to time he would turn to her with some allusion to the past, some "Do you remember?" which sent her thoughts away from Culverdale to scenes where he alone could follow, he touched always on those earlier recollections which needed no apology from him and no pardon from her. She would answer readily enough; but Gilbert, who remembered the time when she believed in him, was apt to imagine a delicate yet unmistakable irony in her untroubled smile. To Frank it revealed a wonderful, far-off tranquillity; but then Frank was very much in love. Mrs. Austin had opened his eyes, and he was prepared to spend his life in a rapturous study of this first miracle. He felt himself at a disadvantage with regard to South, who could look back to a past in which she had a share, instead of a degrading memory of measles and extreme youth; yet, in spite of his humility, he was not unhappy. Mrs. Austin could not fail to perceive his devotion, but she never for one moment supposed

Digitized by Google

that there was anything serious or lasting in it. It seemed to her like a little nosegay of spring flowers, which she might accept with a gracious word of thanks, and she was touched by the thought of its very transitoriness. She was very kind to Frank. Within a week she had learnt his ways, and looks, and words, as one might learn the few simple notes of a bird in one's garden; and yet they pleased her better than a more elaborate performance. "Poor fellow!" she would say to herself, with a half whimsical regret, "it is not my fault—I cannot help it; but if he only knew *how* young he seems to me, how he would hate me!" There, however, she was wrong. Frank would have forgiven her even that.

The warm September days slipped away one after the other, and the only thing of which the young lover could complain was that they were shortened in a quite unjustifiable way, which was not mentioned in the almanac. The sun was slow to rise; but when once breakfast-time had arrived, he rushed across the heavens, went headlong down the west, and Frank found himself dressing for dinner, with the certainty that only a few short hours parted him from bed-time. It is true that the nights had grown long, so long that they could not all be spent in sleep. His light burnt late, and even when it was extinguished it did not follow that he was at rest. Sometimes he was star-gazing. He had never taken such particular notice of the stars before, but they attracted him now because they reminded him of Mrs. Austin. He had made the discovery that certain things—besides old teapots—were in harmony with Mrs. Austin, and consequently possessed something of her charm; and he was beginning a classification of the contents of the universe, as tried by this test. He felt that the midnight sky was very sublime, and that he himself was absurdly unimportant. How could he become more worthy of notice? What sort of destinies used people to fancy they read in the stars? Frank, as he leaned against his window and fixed his eyes upon the far-off points of light, reflected that in all probability he would be High Sheriff one of these days. He wondered whether Mrs. Austin would like a man to be Sheriff. But that would only be for a year. Perhaps it would be better to try to get into Parliament. There was a neighbouring borough which was something of a forlorn hope—he might try that. There must be an election before long; perhaps Mrs. Austin would come down, wear his colours, encourage his supporters, and rejoice in his victory. Only—confound it!—the ballot had spoilt all the fun, and there was no chance of a real good contest, such as they used to have in old times, when the flags were flying, the money going, and the agents outwitting each other for days together. He would have liked the gathering excitement of a prolonged battle; he would not even have minded a little rioting; in fact, an unfriendly mob, howling down any attempt at speech, and to be confronted only with good-humoured coolness and the superior manners of a gentleman, seemed less terrible to Frank than cold-blooded voters, asking questions about his views on unexpected subjects. Nevertheless, for Mrs. Austin's sake, he would

Digitized by Google

face even that ordeal. He remembered, moreover, that the father of one of the neighbouring landowners had been made a baronet—why might not he be made a baronet? It is true that, for his own part, he had no especial desire to be called "Sir Francis," but "Lady Leicester" seemed to him a name not unworthy to be uttered softly, at night, in the presence of the stars.

Mrs. Austin knew nothing of these soaring dreams, which only awaited a word from her lips to become serious intentions. She had no particular ambition on Frank's behalf; in fact, the young squire and his surroundings seemed to her almost ideally perfect. The very heaviness of life at Culverdale pleased her; there was something solid, respectable, and sincere about it; a sense of prosperous restfulness and security rooted deeply in the earth, that she found charming—for a fortnight. She liked to walk with Frank under his spreading trees, and call up faint visions of wives and sisters of bygone squires, who had known those great trunks as slender saplings, and lived and died under their gradually widening shadows. She could even find names for a few of these phantoms, for she had been to the neat little church (Frank's father had restored it), and had seen their monuments, with urns, and cherubs, and festoons of marble drapery upon the walls. It was strange to look at Frank, with the sunshine glancing through a little lancet window on his head; and to think that he too would have a tablet on those neat cold walls one day, and that other guests would stay at the Hall, and come on Sundays, and study it during service time. Frank, at her elbow, read the responses, with a consciousness of his importance to the Established Church, which might have been absurd if it had not been so simple and honest. He sat through the sermon in an attitude expressive of deeper interest than Mrs. Austin found practicable. How was she to know that the whole of that discourse, as the young man heard it, was about herself?

For her own part, she had dreams, but, less happy than Frank, her dreams were of the past instead of the future. When Gilbert South had asked her if she remembered the old time at West Hill, she had answered, "Perfectly." It was quite true; the picture was there, but it had not been called up for years as his words called it up. Even when he did not speak, the knowledge that it was continually in his thoughts seemed to give it a kind of independent existence. Mrs. Austin found herself recalling it in idle moments, and dwelling on all manner of little incidents and details which had been thrust into the background by later events. The old house and garden rose up before her as she knew them in her childish days; the gateway hung with ivy, the apple-tree, under her bed-room window, warped, and leaning away from the strong west winds; the countless blossoms of narcissus and daffodil in early spring. She remembered the hoarse roar of the sea as she lay in bed on stormy nights, the shrieking of the hurrying gusts, the fierce lashing of the driven drops upon the pane, and then the stillness and the rain-washed sweetness of the morning when she woke. It all came back to her, even

Digitized by Google

to the tufts of fern, and the small green leaf-cups growing on the garden wall; but it came back with that peculiar charm of tender remembrance which, combining many impressions of that which we have lost, creates one more beautiful than all. She saw it with a deeper colour in the sea, a wilder splendour of sunsets, a pearly clearness in the morning sky, and a wonderful purity in the lucid depths of air. More than once since she came to Culverdale, it had chanced to her, falling asleep at night, while poor Frank was seeking his fortune in the stars, to dream that she saw Gilbert coming towards her along the grassy path. It was almost impossible to wake from such a dream, and not to look with curious interest at the real man when he came down to breakfast.

With all these pre-occupations, it was hardly surprising that Mrs. Austin did not give much thought to Tiny Vivian, beyond a vague and general good-will, which the girl did not return. Tiny had never changed her mind about Mrs. Austin. "I said I shouldn't like her, and I don't," she triumphantly repeated, one day as she stood talking to Frank.

"It's a fine thing to be consistent, isn't it?" said Frank, drily.

"It's much better than changing one's mind for ever. I can't see anything so very wonderful about her. Of course, she has been good-looking, but so have lots of people, according to what they say. And anybody might talk in that affected way, as if her words were much more precious than anybody else's. It makes me cross."

"So I see."

"I could talk like that, and walk like that too! Look here." And Tiny swept round the room in an imitation of Mrs. Austin, which would have been very tolerable to anybody but Frank.

"Oh, of course!" he said. "That's always the way. Let one woman get hold of another, and one knows what to expect."

"And pray what does one expect?"

"Well, neither justice nor mercy. I suppose you can't help it."

"Oh indeed!" said Tiny. "Then I should like to know what Mrs. Austin says of *me!*"

"As far as I know she doesn't say anything," he answered coolly.

Tiny was pained at Frank's manner, but she looked him in the face and smiled only the more resolutely. "No," she said, "of course she doesn't. That's just what I say. She's awfully stuck up and cold. I can quite understand her jilting Mr. South."

"How do you know she did jilt Mr. South?" he inquired in an irritating tone.

"Why, Frank, didn't she go and marry that other man? Of course she jilted him, and she'd do it again just as likely as not, only I hope he won't give her the chance. He's worth fifty of her! Oh my goodness!" Tiny exclaimed with a burst of defiant laughter, "what a regiment that would be!"

It was quite right that Tiny should speak up for Mr. South, since but for him she would have stood a chance of being somewhat neglected.

Digitized by Google

Gilbert, however, would not suffer that. Apart from the fact that he found Tiny very fascinating, with her great eager eyes, her quick smiles, and the supreme charm of being still in her teens, he could never endure to see any one slighted. His nature was sweet and kindly to the core, and he was always ready to give the sympathy, which, to say the truth, he required rather lavishly. He liked to talk about himself in tones of confidential melancholy, slightly dashed with bitterness. But he would talk to you just as readily about yourself, showing a gentle warmth of interest which was flattering and agreeable. This kind of thing was new to Tiny. Frank was not in the habit of saying much about his inner feelings, and certainly would not have known what to make of Tiny's if she had attempted to express them. Perhaps the girl had been less conscious of having such feelings to express before Mr. South came. It was new to her, too, being accustomed to play a subordinate part, in consequence of youth and inexperience, to meet with some one who considered youthful impressions of far greater value than the dull and blunted opinions of middle age. The squires and rectors about Culverdale did not express such views, nor did their wives and daughters set such value on the artless ideas of a girl who had been nowhere and known nobody. Tiny in a simple unthinking way had loved the country lanes and meadows among which she had been brought up, but with Mr. South's arrival came a quickened consciousness of their beauty and of her feelings about them. She was already a little less simple in consequence of his worship of simplicity, and her great brown eyes were more eager, and sometimes more thoughtful.

The time passed on till Mrs. Austin's visit was within three days of its close. She was to leave Culverdale on the Thursday, and this was the Monday evening, when a garden-party at the house of some friends of the Leicesters' ended in an impromptu dance. Gilbert came up to her as she sat fanning herself, and watching the revolving couples. She shook her head in answer to his request. "Don't ask me," she said. "I haven't danced for years." And she glanced, not without a touch of amusement, at Frank, who had already been rejected, and who stood a little way off, very erect and melancholy.

"Why not?" said Gilbert.

"My dancing days are over," she replied simply. "Go and dance with some of these young people. I see plenty of pretty girls who will be quite ready for a new partner."

He neither moved nor answered, and she turned her head and looked up at him from her low chair. He stood by her side with downcast eyes, pulling his moustache with what would have looked almost like an air of irritation, if she had not known that he was never really out of temper. His expression and attitude reminded her of old days, when he was apt to be offended for a moment because some one had laughed at him, and he never liked to be laughed at. But after a brief pause she looked at him more attentively. Old use had taught her to read Gilbert's face

Digitized by Google

like an open book, more readily than any other face on earth, yet there was something perplexing in it now. Did he care so much to dance with her? She leaned back and waited, knowing that he was sure to speak before long.

"It is always the same thing," he said presently. "This is over, and that is over. And when I remember you everything was just beginning."

"But that was a long while ago—as I think we have frequently remarked."

Gilbert's eyes were fixed on a bit of scarlet geranium which had fallen on the floor. "Yes," he said, "I have missed everything somehow."

"One would think you were a second Rip van Winkle, you seem to find it so hard to realise the lapse of time. You haven't by chance been asleep for a dozen years or so, have you?"

"Upon my word I don't know. I think perhaps I may have been." He moved the bit of red blossom with his foot, and studied it under its new aspect. "Asleep and dreaming perhaps," he said in a low voice.

"Well," Mrs. Austin replied, "as far as I am concerned there is no great difficulty. Since you know the year in which I was born, you have only to buy an almanac, or to look at the top of a newspaper, and I think you will be able to calculate that I am thirty-seven."

"Oh, I know that very well. You will not let me forget it."

"Will not let you forget it? Could you forget it if I would let you?"

"No," said South, lowering his voice still more. "I don't suppose I could. I have learnt my lesson, I think. But I can swear to you that I never remembered it till you taught me."

The music stopped abruptly as he spoke, and seemed to make a sudden vacancy in the air, into which there poured a confused murmur of voices and sweeping of dresses as the dancers strolled by. Among them, with a carmine flush on her soft brown cheek, went Tiny Vivian, and raised her long lashes for one brilliant glance as she passed. "Miss Vivian looks especially well to-night," Mrs. Austin remarked, looking after her, and Gilbert murmured some reply, but the expression which had perplexed his companion deepened on his face. Her attention was distracted for a moment by the arrival of the master of the house, a stout white-whiskered old gentleman, who benignantly expressed the opinion that it was a pleasant sight to see the young people enjoying themselves. When she had agreed with him as completely as he could wish, she looked quickly round, but the tall figure had vanished from her side.

He had gone away to follow once more a useless round of thought which had grown drearily familiar to him of late. He was haunted by the memories which he had called up. He had tried to bring them to life again, and instead they flitted round him like mocking ghosts to be seen but never to be touched. Those happy days in Cornwall were like the opening of a poem, but it had ended in the flattest and feeblest prose. At twenty he was to have been a hero, at thirty-nine he was nothing,

Digitized by Google

and knew that he never would be anything. The experience was not remarkable, but in most cases the contrast is rendered endurable by the gentle influence of time. We become accustomed to it before it is so terribly defined, and half forget the splendour of the starting-point before we reach the pitiful goal. But South was not so fortunate. He saw them both, and saw them always, in Mildred's eyes.

As he stood by the door gazing idly round, his glance suddenly encountered Tiny Vivian's. She looked at him as if she dimly divined his trouble, but turned away her head the moment he noticed her, and yet that swift glance, with its vague proffer of sympathy, came like a ray of light into his dull perplexity. Tiny's eyes, at least, had no reflection of a mocking past in them, and never told him that he was a failure.

IV.

It happens occasionally that an unexpected chill will suddenly depress us, an undefinable blight which seems to come from nowhere in particular and to be everywhere. The weather may have something to do with it, but the chill is within us as well as without, and the outward aspect of things can only emphasise its dreariness.

Something of the kind befell the inhabitants of the Manor House on the Tuesday morning. Every one was dull, the sky was clouded, and the world seemed to have grown old. Gilbert South had a harassed and weary expression, Tiny owned to a headache, Mrs. Leicester was worried by the knowledge that fifteen people were coming to dinner, and that she must keep awake all the evening, and Frank was conscious of nothing but the shadow of Mrs. Austin's approaching departure. Mrs. Austin herself was inclined to think that she had had more than enough of Culverdale. She had never known a place which depended so much on the sunshine for what beauty it possessed, and, in the uniformly diffused shadow, the low-lying park and the meadows with their lines of hedge and ditch oppressed her with a sense of unendurable monotony. There was really nothing to distinguish one enclosure from another, unless it were the presence of cows or sheep. One would have said that the soil of Frank's inheritance was heavy with the dulness of many generations, which rose on sunless days like an exhalation, not precisely poisonous, since good family feelings and respectable virtues would take no harm in it, but far too dense for winged and delicate fancies. Consequently there was no chance of escaping from it even in thought. In truth there seemed no limit to its influence. Mrs. Austin, while she dressed, looked across the river to the village, and saw how the church stood solidly planted among its white gravestones, and pointed with a sharp little spire to a grey and dreary region on high. It was hardly an encouraging prospect.

Frank, poor fellow, suffered from her depression. He was too closely connected with his surroundings to be a congenial companion on such a

Digitized by Google

day; his acres burdened him and dragged him down, and he found her not unkind, but languid and cold. Gilbert South might perhaps have called up other scenes and times by the mere sound of his voice, but he was silent at breakfast-time, and disappeared almost immediately afterwards. It was vaguely understood that he had important letters to write. And, after all, Mrs. Austin was not very sure that she needed any company. As she sat in the drawing-room, turning the pages of a novel as an excuse for silence, she half unconsciously followed a thread of thought which stretched backward to her girlish days and onward to her future. She was still pursuing it in the afternoon when she drove with Tiny Vivian to the neighbouring town to make some purchases for Mrs. Leicester.

The little town remained in her memory as a picture, as places sometimes do, which, being seen but once, in one mood and under one aspect, are not blurred and confused by conflicting impressions. The sullen clouds were as much a part of it as the foot-worn pavement, and a man with an organ, grinding a tune which had been popular a season or two before, was just as important as the vicar who went by with a bundle of little tracts, and bowed to Miss Vivian. The carriage stopped and went on as Tiny directed, the tradesmen started out of their shops as if somebody had pulled a string, and stood bareheaded and smiling at the door while she consulted Mrs. Leicester's list of commissions. At one place she went in, and Mrs. Austin was left alone in a little square. The Town Hall was there, ERECTED MDCCCXLIII., and there also was a drinking-fountain with an inscription which she could not read. The great clock overhead struck four like a knell, and startled her just as she was thinking that Gilbert South certainly was not a hero, and yet——. And a moment later Tiny came out and said "Home" to the coachman.

They did not talk much as they drove back. When the lodge-keeper swung the gate open at the sound of their approach, it occurred to Mrs. Austin to wonder what Tiny had been thinking about so intently all the time.

That evening, after dinner, South came to her and stood for a few minutes turning over some photographs which lay at her elbow. One of them was of a place which he knew and she did not, and in answer to a question of hers he described it. He pressed his hand on the table as he spoke, and a white scar across one of his fingers stood out more prominently and caught Mrs. Austin's eye.

"That cut of yours left a mark," she said, when he had finished. "How frightened I was—do you remember?"

Gilbert looked first at his hand and then at her, with a strange, startled expression, almost as if he felt a throb of pain in his old wound. "Yes," he said, "I remember." And all at once the colour came into his face as if he were a boy again. "I was cutting a stick for your brother Jack," he added hurriedly, "and the knife slipped. Your mother tied it up for me."

Digitized by Google

"Yes, we found her in her store-room. I think Jack thought you were going to die." Mrs. Austin, for a moment, instead of seeing seven or eight country gentlemen, most of them bald, and as many ladies, grouped in the Culverdale drawing-room, saw a sunshiny room, full of shelves and cupboards and boxes, where her mother, with capable hands, was bandaging that finger of Gilbert's, while Jack (poor fellow! he died at school) stood looking on, scared at first, and then, when he found that mother could set it all right, a little aggrieved because after all he hadn't got his stick. Oh, how long ago it all was, and how sadly the old home was broken up! She would have liked to take Gilbert's left hand in hers and hold it, just for the sake of that little scar and the dear people who were dead. And how deeply the memory of that time touched him! Why did he colour up so suddenly at her question and turn away? Was there something special about this one incident? All at once it struck her that hitherto it had been Gilbert, and not she, who had said "Do you remember?" Was he so pleased that she should say it? She recollected, too, that it was while he still had his hand bandaged that he spoke to her one evening by the white roses, and she promised to wait for him till he should come back to the old home. Perhaps that remembrance had called up his blush. Poor Gilbert, could he never forget his boyish inconstancy?

Mrs. Leicester heaved a deep sigh of relief when her guests were gone. "Dear me!" she said suddenly to Mrs. Austin, "is to-morrow really your last day with us? What are you all going to do to-morrow?"

There was a pause. "Are not we going to row down the river to some farm-house?" Mrs. Austin inquired, looking round.

"To old Green's," said Frank.

"Speak for yourself, my dear," said Mrs. Leicester, laughing and nodding. "You don't catch me rowing down rivers. I shall have to die some day, I suppose, but there are plenty of ways of doing it without being drowned."

"Drowned?" Mrs. Austin repeated, with a glance at Frank.

"My mother wouldn't venture on a ditch in a lifeboat without making her will and saying good-by to me," he answered.

"No," Mrs. Leicester replied, in a tone of cheerful assent. "I'm a coward about the water. It's a very good thing everybody isn't like me. I'm sure I should never have found America or Australia or any of those places."

"No," said Frank, "nor the Isle of Wight. You might have seen it was there, like the moon."

"I thought you said you must go to the Carletons to-morrow," said Tiny, in a low voice, to Mrs. Leicester.

"Good gracious, so I must. I forgot. And you must go there with me, you know."

"I won't drown you, if you'll trust me," said Frank to Mrs. Austin.

Digitized by Google

"I'm not afraid," she smiled. "But you see it seems as if nobody would be able to go."

"You said you should like it," Frank persisted, turning his back to the others, and looking fixedly at her.

"It would be very pleasant if it is a fine day," she replied quietly. "But I don't want you to go entirely for me. I thought we were all going."

"I am going, anyhow," he said, "to-morrow or the next day. I want to speak to Green. Of course you will do what you like best. I thought you said you would like it."

"I am so sorry I must take Tiny," said Mrs. Leicester. "Old Mrs. Carleton is her godmother, and she wants to see her, so I really must. What will you do? Will you come with us, or will you go with Frank? I'm sure he is always very careful, and of course there isn't any danger really."

Mrs. Austin had no desire to make Frank miserable on the last day of her stay. "Oh, I should like the row very much if it is fine," she said.

"That's settled then," said Mrs. Leicester cheerfully. "Mr. South, if there's nothing you want to do to-morrow, I'm sure we shall either of us be very pleased if you'll join us."

Frank scowled. But Gilbert, while he professed his delighted readiness to go anywhere or do anything, had not the slightest intention of proposing to make one of the water party. He was convinced that it would be fraught with peril—for him. "That hot-headed boy would certainly do his best to upset me into the river if I interfered with his arrangements," he said to himself. "If he could contrive to give me a ducking, without splashing her, it would fill his soul with pure delight." Gilbert thought he would call on old Mrs. Carleton, who was unlikely to indulge in any such pranks.

Mrs. Leicester was really sorry that she was obliged to break up the party on this last day. She could not see for her part why Mildred and Mr. South had not settled matters a week ago, and enjoyed themselves comfortably as an engaged couple, taking their share of privileges and joking remarks. But she supposed it was to be put off till the end of Mildred's visit, and she was anxious to give Gilbert a chance of coming to the point. She had noticed that Frank seemed to prefer Mrs. Austin to Mr. South, and was inclined to bestow the attention which should have been divided between his guests entirely on her. Frank was inconsiderate at times, but she would give him a quiet hint to leave the two to themselves when they came back from their respective expeditions.

Gilbert South, unconscious of her beneficent schemes, woke the next morning to a dreary certainty that his visit to Culverdale had been a mistake from first to last. For years he had remembered Mildred Fairfax as the truest, the most loving, the most beautiful of womankind. He had dreamed of seeing her again, their meeting had been the one desirable possibility of his life. At last it had come; and he had found

Digitized by Google

her no longer young, beautiful still in her widowhood, but pale, calm, clear-sighted, self-possessed, putting aside his attempt to utter his repentance with gentle words about friendship. Frank might well worship her in his boyish fashion; he was quite right, he had never seen Mildred Fairfax. But for his own part, Gilbert, had he known her intentions, instead of gratefully blessing good Mrs. Leicester, would rather have been inclined to complain to her, very ungratefully and unjustly, "You have

> Unsettled the pure picture in my mind;
> A girl, she was so perfect, so distinct.
> . . . I detest all change,
> And most a change in aught I loved long since."

That was the worst of it. He could not even go back to his dream. Call them up as he would with anxious efforts, his memories of his old love had been slowly dying, day by day, ever since he came to Culverdale. The actual recollections remained, cold, dead facts, but nothing more. There were moments when Tiny Vivian, just because of her youth and hopefulness, seemed nearer the true spirit of his former love than Mrs. Austin. It was not unnatural. If we idealise the past, and most of us do, there is an interval after which old books should not be reopened, old haunts should not be revisited, nor old loves sought out, except with a deliberate view to disenchantment. We expect too much. No sympathy is so perfect as that which we imagine. And Gilbert South had been especially fanciful and dreamy in his recollections. He had had, as it were, just a glimpse of Mildred's pure, girlish love, and then he had been drawn away by a woman older than himself who wanted a little amusement. He had been made a fool of, coarsely, by a practised flirt. Afterwards he attempted to go back; he wrote a dozen letters of explanation and repentance, and of course sent off the worst. It was a failure, and partly in pique, partly in real disgust at himself, for he had a delicate taste, and his first faithlessness left an unpleasant flavour in his mouth, he swore constancy to Mildred's memory as he supposed, but in reality to himself as he would have had himself. It was that former self as well as his former love he had hoped to find again when he met Mrs. Austin.

With her it was different. She had trusted him and he had failed her; the pain had been keen, but with a touch of scorn in it. And later, when the wound was healed and all bitterness gone, she thought of him, not unkindly, but as one whose nature was light and fickle. When she discovered how constantly he had looked back to that old love which she supposed was utterly forgotten, her memory awoke like the autumn blossoming of spring flowers.

On that last day all the interest seemed to be concentrated on the water expedition, as if it were indeed a voyage of vast importance. Nobody thought about the people who meant to call on old Mrs. Carleton, but one would have said that Frank and Mrs. Austin were

Digitized by Google

going to discover a new island at least, and indeed the young fellow had such an impression concerning it as, if it happens to be verified, we call a presentiment. Mr. South and Tiny came down to the river to see them off, but, owing to some little delay in Frank's arrangement, they were obliged to go back, lest they should keep Mrs. Leicester waiting, and leave Mrs. Austin where she stood, a slim dark figure at the water's edge. The dull grey surface, with its floating leaves and its grasses drawn by the silent current, was shaded by great groups of trees, whose dusky greenness was lighted here and there by gleams of autumn yellow. Mrs. Austin did not move, no breath of wind stirred the dark masses of foliage overhead; it was like a picture with something of melancholy stateliness about it. When Frank was ready the solitary figure disappeared from the bank, and they went gliding from under the shadow of the trees out into the wide, sunless fields.

Honestly, it was not a very beautiful scene. To Frank, who had known it all his life, the question of its beauty or ugliness did not occur; it was simply *the* river, and as such it had moulded his conception of all rivers. On its dull waters such childish dreams as he had known had embarked and set sail. As a boy he had fished there, just as four or five urchins were fishing now. They stared, open-mouthed and silent, at young Mr. Leicester and his boat, but took no notice of the lady who looked with a musing smile at the little rustic group as she went by. Presently came a curve in the stream, where a clump of alders grew, and bushes leaned despondently over the water which was eating the earth away from their roots. The more distant prospect showed a monotonous variety of ploughed land and pasture, with lines of trees following the hedges, and here and there a cottage or two and a bit of road. Mrs. Austin and Frank talked as they went. He told her how one bitter winter the river was frozen, and he skated to the farm where they were going now. He pointed out a lonely house, and spoke of the people who lived there. He showed her how far the floods had reached in a wet season, a muddy expanse in which little files of cropped willows seemed to wade knee-deep, and the water washed through the gates of lost meadows. And he broke off suddenly in the midst of what he was saying to ask, "Where shall you be this time to-morrow?"

"Half-way to London, I should think," she answered; "I don't know how long the journey takes."

Frank looked at her and was silent. He wondered whether he should speak as they came back.

The Greens' house stood by the roadside a little way from the river. The farm-buildings and some big stacks had a pleasant prosperous air, but the house itself was an ugly little plastered box, with a bit of treeless garden in front, blossoming with prim sulphur-coloured dahlias. Frank did not seem to have much to say to old Green after all. The two exchanged a few words, and then came to the little parlour, where Mrs. Austin sat on a horsehair sofa giving the latest news of Mrs.

Digitized by Google

Leicester and Miss Vivian to the farmer's wife. Frank was on very pleasant terms with his tenants, who evidently thought their young landlord a most important personage. Other people were "high," but vaguely "high," and a duke would not have impressed Mrs. Green as much as Mr. Leicester from the Manor House. The Prince of Wales, perhaps, as a young man residing in palaces, and holding a well-defined position as the Queen's son, might have eclipsed Frank, but it would have taken a prince to do it. Mrs. Austin perceived, with a slight smile, how unimportant she was compared with her companion, but she was not in a mood to be amused by that or anything else that afternoon. She was glad to leave the house, to escape from hospitable offers of cake and home-made wine, and to find herself once more upon the road. Even then, however, the old farmer insisted that Frank should look at a shed which was not satisfactory, and she had to wait while the matter was discussed.

There was a little pond with neat white railings just opposite the house, and she strolled across and stood by it with a mysterious sense of loneliness and desolation upon her. Still as the afternoon was, she fancied that there was a mournful little rustling in the boughs of a stunted oak which grew a few yards away. The little pool mirrored a vacant grey sky. It was absurd, and yet she felt as if she would have given anything to see Gilbert South coming towards her, instead of which it was Frank, who tore himself away from the farmer and darted across the road.

"I've kept you waiting," he said; "I'm so sorry! Oh, and you are tired, aren't you?"

"A little," she allowed. "Nothing to matter."

"It's too bad of me! What can I do?" he exclaimed with anxious solicitude. "Come in again and let Mrs. Green make you some tea."

"Oh no, no," she said. "I would rather go back."

Frank was in despair. "What a brute I am!" he reproached himself.

Mrs. Austin fairly laughed at the intensity of his remorse. "What would you do if I were very tired?" she said.

He hardly dared to speak to her as they went back, and perhaps it was owing to that enforced silence that later he recalled with especial vividness the plash of his oars on their quietly winding way, the little ripples dying among the dry autumnal reeds on either bank, and the light from the west, where a pale sun struggled feebly through the clouds, falling coldly on the beautiful face before him. For Mrs. Austin, meanwhile, a soft current of thought flowed with the river, setting ever more strongly towards a final resolution. If it rested with her to make Gilbert South happy, why should she not do it? He was not what she had once imagined him, yet he was truer and better than she had believed him during the years they had been parted. There was no man living whose thoughts and memories, nay, whose little tricks of speech and gesture, were bound up with her past life as Gilbert's were; and the

Digitized by Google

recollection of his troubled face haunted her like a reproach, "Why not?" she said to herself over and over again, to the measured sound of Frank's oars. "Why not?—why not?—if it would make him happy."

"I don't know why it is," she said to young Leicester, when they had landed, and were walking slowly up to the house, "but I have had a feeling all this afternoon as if something were going to happen."

"That's funny," said Frank; "so have I."

"Have you really? If I had known that, I might have wondered whether you were really going to drown me. But here we are, safely landed, in spite of our forebodings."

He surveyed the sullen sky. "Perhaps there's thunder in the air," he suggested.

"Perhaps. That might account for my feeling tired. I've been a dull companion, I fear."

"No," Frank was beginning to say, when he stopped short. They had just come in sight of the house, and he stared at a farmer's chaise, driven by a labouring man, which was going away from the front door. "That's old Clayton's trap," he said; "what on earth has that come here for? And—why, surely that's my mother coming to meet us—they can't possibly have been there and got back by this time!"

"There has been an accident!" said Mrs. Austin with sudden certainty. "Go and see what has happened. Your mother is safe, but ——"

Frank ran forward. It was his mother hurrying down the drive. "What is it?" he said.

"Oh, Frank!" she cried. "Oh, my dear boy! Those dreadful horses!"

"What's the matter? The new horses?"

"Yes. We went by Upton Lane because I wanted to inquire about Barker's wife—by the railway cutting, you know. She likes to see one if it's only for a minute—at least, she did like, poor thing!"

Frank stamped impatiently. "—— Barker's wife!" he said. "Is anybody hurt? Is anybody dead?"

"She's dead—she died yesterday—nobody else."

"Oh, go on! go on! What happened?"

"Why I went in just to speak to poor Barker——" Barker's final destiny was so nearly settled that Mrs. Leicester gasped and hurried on—"and the express rushed by, at least I think it was the express—they shouldn't make them scream so, Frank, it isn't whistling, it's a downright scream—and the horses bolted down the lane to the left, and he couldn't hold them——"

"The lane to the gravel-pit!" said Frank, in a horror-struck voice.

"Yes! And Tiny and Mr. South! But they dashed against a bit of wall at the turning, and were thrown out."

"Are they hurt? Much?"

"No, nobody is hurt, only shaken. But, oh, Frank!"

"The horses?" said Frank, greatly relieved.

Digitized by Google

"Nothing much. Robinson says it's quite wonderful. There's no harm done."

"What then?" Frank grasped his mother's arm. "There's something more. Tiny is hurt—I know she is. Why don't you say so?"

"No, she isn't; she isn't indeed, nor Mr. South either."

"Well?"

"They are not hurt," said Mrs. Leicester desperately, "but they're engaged to be married!"

She looked as if she expected an explosion, but none followed. Frank's hand unclosed and dropped by his side, and he stood for a moment staring dumbly at her. "Are you sure you didn't fall out too, and pitch on your head?" he said at last.

"No, indeed; I was in the cottage when the train came. Oh, it's quite true, Frank. You know I really couldn't help it. Are you angry?"

"Angry?" he repeated, "why should I be angry? I'm dreaming I think. It isn't a joke?" he said suddenly with a threatening frown.

"No! oh no! Is it wrong, do you think? What could I do?"

"Tiny and South!" said Frank. "Tiny! Well—if she likes him! I don't see why it should be wrong," he went on, bewildered, yet beginning to perceive how in some ways it might be marvellously right. "That's for her own people to decide. If they haven't any objection. But Tiny and South!"

"You are not angry then? You don't mind?"

"No, why should I? If Tiny is happy it's all right. But I don't seem able to believe it yet."

"Well, here is Mr. South," said Mrs. Leicester more cheerfully. "Perhaps you'll believe him."

Frank looked up and saw South coming across the grass. He was pale, but there was a peculiar brightness about his face. His eyes were shining, he smiled a little defiantly. Surprise is not the easiest thing in the world to encounter, especially if one is a little surprised at oneself. Gilbert had only just found himself out. Before Frank could take a step to meet him, Mrs. Austin, who had come up during the explanation, went forward swiftly and held out her hand.

"Gilbert, is this true?" she said. "I may congratulate you, not only on your fortunate escape, but on your engagement too?"

(Mrs. Leicester in the background arched her eyebrows and looked at Frank. "I had forgotten her!" she whispered.)

South ceased to smile, but he met her questioning eyes honestly enough. "Yes," he said slowly, "it's quite true." He looked at her as if he would have said more.

"Then I wish you all happiness—I wish it with all my heart," she replied. There was no tremor in her soft clear voice. "I think our old friendship gives me the right to be one of the first to congratulate you."

"Thank you," Gilbert replied confusedly. He still held her hand, and looked anxiously at her as if he feared some hidden meaning in her

Digitized by Google

words. "Mildred!" he said, and there was a world of pleading in his tone. "Tell me——" he stopped short. What was he going to say?

"Believe me," she said, and he felt her fingers tighten on his in a kindly clasp as she spoke, "I have always wished your happiness—always. And I am glad to think that you have found it." And with that she nodded a smiling little farewell and walked towards the house.

Gilbert gazed after her with a throb of regretful pain. He had known that it was impossible to go back to the old days, Mildred had taught him that. And yet as he looked over his shoulder at her retreating figure, he had a strange fancy that it was the very past itself, the past which he had so long worshipped and from which he had so suddenly awakened, which was at that moment leaving him for ever, a stately shape passing silently away and never looking back. He would not have recalled her, since he could not recall the Mildred who believed in him and looked at him with happy hope in her eyes. It was Tiny who believed in him now. Mildred had no need of him. Tiny had called to him, "*Gilbert!*" in their peril that afternoon, and his heart had answered the innocently appealing cry, the name by which she had never called him, uttered as her one word then. Tiny had no need to grudge his old love that one backward glance. It was all over in a moment, and Gilbert drew a long breath, and went forward to receive Frank's congratulations.

They were rather briefly and bluntly given. Frank was eager to be gone; the picture which for Gilbert personified a softly sentimental regret was for him a vision of hope, which beckoned him to follow. He uttered such good wishes as came readily to his lips, and were suitable to anybody who was going to be married. He realised the accident by the gravel-pit more clearly than the engagement, but he was too impatient and preoccupied to talk much even about that. "It's a mercy you weren't killed!" he said shortly.

"Well, I suppose it was a narrow escape," Gilbert answered with a smile.

"A narrow escape—yes, I should think so. It couldn't very well have been much narrower, as far as I can see. However, a miss is as good as a mile, I suppose."

"So they say," Gilbert replied; "but, for my own part, I should prefer the mile next time. And so would your cousin, I fancy."

"Ah, Tiny knew what you were coming to! It's no wonder if she was scared, poor child!" said Frank. "There isn't a nastier place about here. By the way, I haven't seen Tiny yet." And he brushed past Gilbert and departed, as if to congratulate Tiny were the one object of life.

He went by the stable-yard, where he speedily ascertained that the amount of damage done was so absurdly small that there was nothing serious about the whole business, except what might have been. He cut Robinson's explanations short, and hurried to the house, where, as luck

Digitized by Google

would have it, he met Tiny in the hall. She looked a little like Gilbert South, pale with agitation, and yet radiant. Her great brown eyes were shining, and her lips quivered with excitement, which might end either in sobs or smiles. "Oh, Frank!" she exclaimed; and she, too, looked up anxiously to see how the young master received the news.

"Well," said he, taking her hands in his; "this is a pretty afternoon's work! What will your people at home say, do you suppose?"

"Oh, my people at home! They'll say what I say," Tiny answered, with a tremulous laugh. "I shall make them."

"And what do you say?"

"Oh, Frank! isn't it strange? I'm so glad, but I want you to say you are glad too. Frank, you do like him now, don't you? You are not vexed?"

"No, I'm not vexed, if you are happy. Oh, I like him well enough. But I think you ought to have had somebody younger," he said, doubtfully.

"Oh, no, Frank," Tiny replied, with great decision. "It doesn't matter the least bit, when it's the man. If it were the woman, now, it would matter; but not when it's the man."

"Well, you know best." And Frank released one of his hands. "I'm sure I wish you all happiness. It comes rather suddenly," he said, with a laugh.

"So it did to me," Tiny replied; "and I'm not sure he would have told everybody directly, but we were in the Barkers' garden; we couldn't go in, because poor Mrs. Barker is dead, you know, and we were waiting till they got something to bring us home——"

"Oh, that's where it was settled?"

"Yes," Tiny answered, with a conscious little laugh. "No; I think it was settled as we tumbled out, but that was where he said it properly. And your mother came round the corner upon us——"

"I see," said Frank.

"They do grow such a lot of southernwood there," Tiny went on, as the colour rushed to her cheeks. "He leant against the palings, and there was a great bush of it. He smelt like a Sunday-school nosegay as we were coming back; but he says he shall always like it now."

The sight of Tiny, alive, laughing, and talking nonsense with quivering lips, suddenly brought the thought of her peril vividly before Frank. "Oh, Tiny!" he said, "you might have been killed!"

"Don't," she said; "I saw it all—the gravel-pit, you know, just as we went down into it one day; do you remember? Ever so long ago, almost the first time I stayed here. I saw it all, as if there were a terrible light in it, and I said to myself, 'I shall die there!' And then I called to Gilbert, and I remember his face for one moment, and we got to the turning, and before we could jump out it was all over; and there we were, picking ourselves up, and none the worse!"

"Thank God," said Frank.

Digitized by Google

"Only so dusty; and somehow I felt very small when I found it had all ended in nothing at all."

Frank laughed. "Never mind; it was better than being a smashed heroine."

"And it has ended in something, only a different sort of thing, hasn't it?" said Tiny. "Where is everybody, Frank? In the drawing-room?"

"Everybody? No; I left him with my mother, on the lawn."

Tiny made a face at him. "Oh, by the way, I know Mrs. Austin isn't there. I met her a minute ago, on the stairs, and she kissed me and congratulated me. I say, who told her?"

"She heard my mother telling me, I believe."

"Oh, I wondered if Gilbert had. Do you suppose she minds much?"

"I don't believe she minds at all," said Frank. "Why should she? She told him she was very glad."

"I believe she does mind, though," Tiny nodded. "She was very fond of talking about old times."

"Rubbish!" Frank exclaimed; "you're as bad as my mother!" and he walked off, leaving Tiny happily convinced that it was impossible Mrs. Austin should not envy her the possession of Gilbert's love.

"Now or never!" he said to himself as he went slowly up the stairs. His life hung in the balance, his heart was beating fast, and every throb brought him nearer the decisive moment. He turned into a little room where Mrs. Leicester and Tiny sometimes sat. He would lie in wait for Mrs. Austin there, she must pass the door as she went down.

Frank leant against the window, looking at the dim undulations of the landscape, and vaguely recognising familiar points. It was strange to stand in that little room which he had known all his life; he could remember learning his lessons there at his mother's knee—waiting for his fate to come to him. At any moment it might come, with a quiet step, and the soft sweeping of her dress in the passage. Before a dozen more of those strong heart-throbs were over, her eyes might be meeting his. She would look him in the face, he knew, but what would she say to him? Frank had never thought less of himself than he did at that moment, and yet beneath all his anxiety he had an unreasoning faith in his good luck. Fortune had always been kind to him, people had always done what he wanted them to do. Yes, but Mrs. Austin was different. He dared not hope, and yet the mere thought that success was possible flushed him like a draught of wine. Then she would not be Mrs. Austin but—Mildred, he would not have to count days and nights as steps towards parting, they would all be his, other people would come and go, but she would stay. When she said "home" she would mean Culverdale. On that last thought he dwelt with exquisite delight, as if he could hear her uttering the word. It was the wildest dream, yet in a few minutes that dream might be his actual life; that was the wonder of it. And was

Digitized by Google

not fortune smiling on him already? He had been afraid of Gilbert South, he had had misgivings about Tiny's troubled eyes, and now just at the right moment all his doubts and fears had vanished away, he was free to go to his love, and she was free to come to him. There could be no shadow of reproach or regret between them.

He heard her footfall in the passage, he called "Mrs. Austin!" it paused, and she appeared on the threshold of the open door. He had been expecting her and watching for her, and yet when she came in answer to his call, he felt as if he were taken by surprise and had not a word to say. She stood in the doorway, waiting for him to speak, and on her delicate lips was that faint half smile which seemed to Frank to be the sum of all the poetry in the world. "What is it?" she said. "Did you want me?"

"Don't go down for a few minutes," he entreated. "I have something to say to you."

She looked unsuspectingly at him. "Some other time," she said, "I really must go to your mother."

"My mother? Oh, she will wait a few minutes for me!" And, before she could speak another word, Frank, with eager eyes, and stammering speech, was telling the story of his love. Even as he looked at her pale, startled face, before she had opened her lips to answer him, he knew that he had failed. And yet failure, now that it had actually come, seemed so incredible that Frank tried to avert it, by repeating what he had already said, as if every second which elapsed before she spoke was something gained. But all at once he stopped short, with a sense of the utter uselessness of any words.

"Oh, I am sorry!" said Mrs. Austin, meeting his eyes with a simple, tender sorrow in hers. She might have looked something the same if she had inadvertently hurt some dumb creature in the Culverdale woods.

"Don't!" said Frank.

"I never dreamed of this—never! I'm more sorry than words can say if anything I have said or done——"

"No!" Frank exclaimed. "You have done nothing wrong. If I'm a fool I don't know that it's my fault, but I'm sure it isn't yours!"

She could not help smiling, so gentle a smile that it could not wound him. "You must not think of this," she said. "It can't be. For one thing you must remember that you are a young man and I am an old woman. You will choose better one of these days—you have your life before you." She added after a moment, "Mine is behind me, at least the best of it."

"Don't talk like that!" said Frank. "What do a few years matter one way or the other? I would be older if I could, of course." (He could wish to be changed, but he could desire no change in her). "But I shall grow older," he said, trying to laugh.

She shook her head. "And so shall I!"

"If that is all," he exclaimed hotly, "it would be cruel——"

Digitized by Google

"But it isn't all. Believe me, Mr. Leicester, what you ask is impossible."

"I know I'm not good enough, but isn't there anything I could do? If I tried to get into Parliament—should you like me to do that?" said Frank desperately. His hurried thought sought any possible advancement that might make him more worthy in her eyes. "I'm not clever, of course, but surely a man must be good for something if he tries with all his heart. Tell me what you would like me to do, and I'll do it!"

He stood opposite her: his face was pale and keen with excitement: he looked so roused, so manly, so earnest, that for one moment the thought crossed Mrs. Austin's mind that if fate had but sent Frank instead of Gilbert into that earlier life of which she had spoken, he might have become such a hero as she had dreamed. But it was only a passing thought. Something told her that Frank, as he spoke, touched the highest point of which he was capable. It might be that he too felt that at that moment the flood of passion and resolution reached its limit, but he believed that the wave, if not repulsed, would have force enough to carry him onward through the lower waters of his later life.

"I think you are good for a great deal," she said, "but that isn't the question. You must believe me when I tell you that I am very sorry, but what you ask me can't be."

"You are quite sure? There is no chance for me?"

She paused for a moment, looking at him. Then, as if it pained her to speak that last word, she answered with a little negative movement of her head.

The eager expression died out of his eyes and his face relaxed. "Very well," he said. "Then I suppose there's nothing to do but to say good-by." He seemed to be making an effort to master himself, and Mrs. Austin looked aside at the window and waited till he should speak again.

"See here," he said, after a brief silence, "I shall tell my mother I have to go up to town on business this evening, but that I'm coming down to-morrow morning. I shall get away so, without any fuss, and to-morrow I shall telegraph that I'm detained, and I shan't come back for a day or two."

"Yes, I understand," she answered. "This is good-by. And when we meet again, I hope——"

Frank had taken up a pencil which happened to be lying on the table, dropped it, and stooped to find it on the floor. He rose with a slight flush on his cheek. "People don't always meet," he said. "Sometimes it's years first. Perhaps we never shall meet again."

"Perhaps not. That is possible of course." Mrs. Austin was a little puzzled by his manner.

The colour deepened on his face. "Well," he said, "why should we? If it must be all over, let it be all over!" He looked at her, crimsoning with the consciousness that he was saying something alto-

Digitized by Google

gether unlike his ordinary everyday talk. "I would rather we didn't meet. I would rather say good-by now. You understand, don't you? Remember me a little as I am to-day."

"I shall always remember you," she answered.

"And let me remember you as you are. If we chance to meet, why we must. But why should we? We never met till now. If it depends on me I think we never will meet again."

Mrs. Austin looked at him with an expression which was at once startled and thoughtful, and a faint tinge of rose on her pale face made answer to Frank's blush. The entreaty "Let me remember you as you are," touched her strangely. She knew that she was beautiful, but she knew also that her beauty was on the wane, and there was a melancholy pleasure in the thought that, though for the world she might grow old, for this one man she should always remain such as she was at that moment of farewell. She could not marry him, she did not love him, but woman-like she did desire to be always young for her young lover. She desired it too for her own sake. Otherwise it seemed to her that the mere lapse of a few years might turn Frank's passionate devotion and her answering pity into a ridiculous joke. If she were a faded elderly woman and he a heavy respectable squire, would it be possible to remember without laughter that they had ever felt and spoken as they were feeling and speaking then? Why should not Frank have his way, foolish and boyish though it might be?

"Let it be so, then," she said. "If you like it best, we will say 'Good-by' here and now." She looked at him very sadly. "I wish I had never come here."

"No, no!" cried Frank, with sudden passion, almost as if he thought that her wish could really take her sweet unapproachable presence out of his memory. "No; I can part with you—I must part with you—but I couldn't part with the time I have had."

"I feel as if I had done nothing but harm, and yet I can't help it," she went on, half to herself.

"How have you done any harm?" Frank demanded. "Because I love you, and you won't have me? Do you think"—this with an uncertain laugh—"that I shall take to drinking, perhaps—go to the dogs? After loving *you?*"

"No, I don't think that; but I'm sorry you should have wasted your love on me."

"It isn't wasted," said Frank, after a pause, gazing intently at the floor. "Look here, Mrs. Austin, I shall never, as long as I live, love any woman as I love you now. It can't be. One must have one best love of all in one's life, and I've given mine to you. But it isn't wasted, for all that. If ever I marry, and you hear of it, you'll know that my love was better worth having than it could have been if I had never seen you. That isn't being wasted, is it? And you have done good instead of harm—no harm at all."

Digitized by Google

He looked up quickly, and saw that her eyes were full of tears. "I think she will be a happy woman who loves you and whom you love," she said, half turning from him. "And now good-by."

"Stay one moment more," he entreated. "Let me have one last look. Remember, I'm never going to see you again; I want to recollect you as you are now."

She paused with perfect simplicity, and faced him where he stood. He looked at her, turned his eyes away for a moment, and then looked back.

"It's no good," he said. "When I look away I see you as I saw you that first night, when they were playing, and you walked past me and were not thinking of me. I can see you so any moment I like. Or in the boat this afternoon—you were not thinking of me then either. Perhaps afterwards this will come back to me too," said Frank, still gazing at her as if he would learn her face with its far-off compassion by heart. "Well, good-by!" he ended, with something of rough abruptness in his tone. But even as he said it, in the bitter wrench of parting, the sound of his own voice jarred upon him with a sense of unfitness. "Good-by," he repeated, with the gentleness he had learnt from her.

"Good-by," said Mrs. Austin, and held out her hand, white and with a ring sparkling in the evening light.

He clasped it with the tender reverence which that last touch demanded. "I should like you to say 'Good-by, Frank,' just for once, if you would," he entreated.

With a faint smile of assent she said it very sweetly, drew her hand out of his, and went away.

Frank stood where she had left him, at first with feelings too exalted to be conscious of anything but her beautiful sorrowful face, and the sudden blank of her departure. But as his excitement subsided, the grey light, which always finds its way from the outer world into a passionate sorrow, crept into his heart. There is nothing so dreary as the realisation of loss under its commonplace aspect, no longer as a blow, but as a lasting absence of beauty and joy in dull days to come, the foreshadowing of life's inevitable routine at the moment when it is unendurable even to remember that the days of the week will follow each other in their accustomed order. Frank hated Culverdale as he stood gazing out of the window. There were streaks of yellow and sullen red in the cloudy west, and it seemed to him that never since the world began had there been so ugly and cheerless a sunset. The wind was getting up, and there was something inexpressibly mournful in the shivering of the trees; and yet he stood there, looking and listening till the slow striking of a distant clock startled him from his reverie, and reminded him that he had no time to lose.

As he went down he paused for a moment on the stairs to make sure of his calmness, and, looking into the shadowy hall below, he saw the

Digitized by Google

oor of the drawing-room open, and Tiny come out. When she passed, a slim dusky figure, before a grey window, Frank could not have put the thought into words; but it was his turn to feel, as Gilbert South had felt, as if he saw his old life passing away with bowed head and lingering steps. "Tiny!" he called, and came flying down the stairs in his impetuous fashion.

"Yes," she said, and stopped short. She could hardly see his face in the twilight.

"Tiny," said Frank, breathlessly, "I'm going away—I've had a letter. It's only till to-morrow—it's nothing. But I don't think I congratulated you properly just now——"

"Oh yes, Frank, you did," said Tiny, who felt that he must have congratulated her properly, since he had thought enough about it to accuse himself like this.

"No, I didn't, not as I meant to. I hope you'll be very happy, very happy, always."

"Oh yes," said Tiny, promptly, as if her uninterrupted bliss were the simplest matter of course.

"Look here," Frank continued, "this is a sort of good-by, because it won't be the same thing now. You'll have South to think of——"

"Oh, Frank, but I'm not going to forget you!"

"No, no," said Frank; "we've been something like brother and sister, haven't we?" He held her hand tightly in his, and looked at her through the dusk. "I don't think I ever kissed you, Tiny, even when you were little; and after all we are cousins, you know." She put up her face and kissed him silently. The remembrance of all their pleasant days at Culverdale was about them as their lips met—it was like a shadowy little world of meadow and copse and cornfield, garden and river, bounded by the far horizon of childhood. Both were conscious of that dim background, though Tiny's consciousness was only a half sweet, half sad regret in the midst of new-found joy. As for Frank, he felt that if South didn't make Tiny very happy—always—he should like to horsewhip him. And he would do it too! For Tiny must and should be happy, though he couldn't be.

V.

Frank was at Tiny's wedding early in December; but he contrived, on one pretext or another, to be away from Culverdale during the greater part of the winter. He ended his wanderings, and arrived at home, towards the close of March. "Like the swallows," he said, as he took up his position on the rug and surveyed the familiar room. There was a little change in Frank himself; he looked a little keener, a little older, and he had learned to laugh a little, to himself as well as to other people, at things which could not be mended. He stood smiling and interested while his mother poured out her news.

Digitized by Google

"And I had a letter from Tiny this morning," she said. "The child seems quite absurdly happy."

"It's a good thing for you that she is happy," said Frank. "You are responsible for that marriage, you know."

"How can you say so? I'm sure I had nothing to do with it. I never dreamt of such a thing!"

Frank shook his head. "Oh, you're a terrible match-maker; there's no escaping you. If you miss one you make another. Where is Tiny now?"

"Rome. Would you like to see the letter?"

He took the flimsy sheets, and deciphered Tiny's dashing raptures rather laboriously. It was the same Tiny; yet not quite the same. There were pretty little airs of authority, and turns of expression which showed that Tiny, who had never been very important before, felt herself something of a queen in her new life. There was wonder at novel sights and experiences—he seemed to see her wide brown eyes as he read—and a profound belief in her husband's perfection. Frank folded the letter and gave it back. He perceived that there was no need for him to start off to Rome with a horsewhip to secure Tiny's happiness. It was taken out of his hands altogether.

Having told her news, Mrs. Leicester began to make inquiries. Had Frank seen anything of the Stauntons as he came through town?

He had called there, and afterwards had been asked to dine.

"Well, then, what is this about Mrs. Austin? I had a note from Mrs. Staunton a day or two ago, and she said she thought I should soon hear some news about her that would surprise me. What does she mean?"

Frank looked vaguely in the direction of the piano. "It means that other people can try their hands at match-making as well as you."

"Oh! is she going to be married? I thought perhaps it was a sisterhood or something of that sort. Is she really going to be married?"

"Can't say. People don't always succeed with their matches, you know. But there's a man who admires her very much, it seems, and Mrs. Staunton is always trying to bring them together. It's a nice little amusement for her, I suppose; she doesn't seem to have much else to do, except drink afternoon tea."

"Did you see Mrs. Austin?"

"No," said Frank, still staring into space; "she was out of town."

"And who is this man? What is his name?"

She was informed that his name was Rowland.

"But who is he? Tell me something about him."

"Oh! I don't know. He's a middle-aged man—Fred Staunton pointed him out to me—getting a little grey."

"But you must know more about him than that. What does he do?"

Digitized by Google

"Breaks stones, I believe," Frank replied.

Mrs. Leicester looked so utterly astounded and aghast that he began to laugh. "Oh, don't be frightened!" he said. "It's all right. It all depends on what you do it with. He breaks 'em with a little hammer, and that's very respectable."

"Oh, you mean that he's something—what do you call it?—something geological?" she exclaimed, and was much relieved.

"That's about it," said Frank. He threw his shoulders back and stretched his long arms. "Upon my word I think I'd sooner do an honest day's work on the roads than go knocking off little chips of stone and writing papers about 'em. But I suppose he likes it."

"Dear me!" Mrs. Leicester mused. "I should really think it would be a very nice thing for Mildred."

"I should leave her to decide that if I were you."

"It must be very lonely for her as she is. I wonder when the wedding will be. Last time we gave her a pair of pink and gold candlesticks——"

"Did you?" said Frank. "Then don't do it again."

"Why, no, of course not. Well, I must think about it."

"If I were you, I'd wait till I knew there was something to think about," said Frank drily, and there was a silence, broken after a time by Mrs. Leicester. "I've got an idea!" she announced.

Frank looked round rather impatiently, expecting to hear of a wedding present. "I've been thinking," said his mother, "wouldn't you like me to ask her to come down again before her marriage? You would—wouldn't you?"

He started. "No!" he said.

"No—really?"

"No," he repeated. "Why should she come? It was all very well for once, when you were match-making, but I don't want to see Mrs. Austin again."

"Really?" said Mrs. Leicester. "Well, you surprise me—there's no making you out, Frank. I knew you didn't like her at first, but at the end of the time I thought you were just a little taken with her——"

Frank's answer was an impatient movement of his shoulders.

"Oh, I was wrong, I suppose," Mrs. Leicester continued, cheerfully, "but it was so. First I thought you didn't like her, and then I didn't know, and then I thought you did."

"Well, you were right once," said Frank.

"Yes; but it was very funny—I really thought you did. I don't mean anything serious, of course, but I thought, now, that if she had been a little younger——Or that you would take a fancy one of these days to somebody younger, but that style, you know."

"Did you?" he answered, with a laugh. "Then you were wrong—quite wrong. I shall marry some time or other, but my wife won't be the least bit like Mrs. Austin."

Digitized by Google

"Well, then, my dear boy, I'm sure it was very nice of you to be so attentive just because she was your mother's old friend. I hadn't the least idea you disliked her as much as all that."

"Disliked her—rubbish!" said Frank. "You're always going from one extreme to the other." He turned round and stood with his hands in his pockets, and his head bent, staring so absently at the fire that his mother said, smilingly—

"A penny for your thoughts! Come, they must be worth hearing!"

"Oh, I don't know," he began, rather sulkily; but all at once he laughed and looked up. "Here, hand over that penny," he said; "I was wondering how long it took to get over the measles."

Mrs. Leicester was much amused at the absurd idea, and gave him very precise information as to the time which had elapsed in his own case before his recovery was quite complete. "But I don't know that it is the same with everybody," she said.

"No, I dare say not," he replied, a little vaguely. "But I suppose a fellow always does get over them some time or other, doesn't he?"

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MARIAN ALMOND CAME UP TO CATHERINE, IN COMPANY WITH A TALL YOUNG MAN.

Digitized by Google

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JUNE, 1880.

Washington Square.*

I.

DURING a portion of the first half of the present century, and more particularly during the latter part of it, there flourished and practised in the city of New York a physician who enjoyed perhaps an exceptional share of the consideration which, in the United States, has always been bestowed upon distinguished members of the medical profession. This profession in America has constantly been held in honour, and more successfully than elsewhere has put forward a claim to the epithet of "liberal." In a country in which, to play a social part, you must either earn your income or make believe that you earn it, the healing art has appeared in a high degree to combine two recognised sources of credit. It belongs to the realm of the practical, which in the United States is a great recommendation; and it is touched by the light of science—a merit appreciated in a community in which the love of knowledge has not always been

* Copyrighted in the United States. Reproduction reserved.

Digitized by Google

accompanied by leisure and opportunity. It was an element in Doctor Sloper's reputation that his learning and his skill were very evenly balanced; he was what you might call a scholarly doctor, and yet there was nothing abstract in his remedies—he always ordered you to take something. Though he was felt to be extremely thorough, he was not uncomfortably theoretic, and if he sometimes explained matters rather more minutely than might seem of use to the patient, he never went so far (like some practitioners one has heard of) as to trust to the explanation alone, but always left behind him an inscrutable prescription. There were some doctors that left the prescription without offering any explanation at all; and he did not belong to that class either, which was after all the most vulgar. It will be seen that I am describing a clever man; and this is really the reason why Doctor Sloper had become a local celebrity. At the time at which we are chiefly concerned with him, he was some fifty years of age, and his popularity was at its height. He was very witty, and he passed in the best society of New York for a man of the world—which, indeed, he was, in a very sufficient degree. I hasten to add, to anticipate possible misconception, that he was not the least of a charlatan. He was a thoroughly honest man—honest in a degree of which he had perhaps lacked the opportunity to give the complete measure; and, putting aside the great good-nature of the circle in which he practised, which was rather fond of boasting that it possessed the "brightest" doctor in the country, he daily justified his claim to the talents attributed to him by the popular voice. He was an observer, even a philosopher, and to be bright was so natural to him, and (as the popular voice said) came so easily, that he never aimed at mere effect, and had none of the little tricks and pretensions of second-rate reputations. It must be confessed that fortune had favoured him, and that he had found the path to prosperity very soft to his tread. He had married at the age of twenty-seven, for love, a very charming girl, Miss Catherine Harrington, of New York, who, in addition to her charms, had brought him a solid dowry. Mrs. Sloper was amiable, graceful, accomplished, elegant, and in 1820 she had been one of the pretty girls of the small but promising capital which clustered about the Battery and overlooked the Bay, and of which the uppermost boundary was indicated by the grassy waysides of Canal Street. Even at the age of twenty-seven Austin Sloper had made his mark sufficiently to mitigate the anomaly of his having been chosen among a dozen suitors by a young woman of high fashion, who had ten thousand dollars of income and the most charming eyes in the island of Manhattan. These eyes, and some of their accompaniments, were for about five years a source of extreme satisfaction to the young physician, who was both a devoted and a very happy husband. The fact of his having married a rich woman made no difference in the line he had traced for himself, and he cultivated his profession with as definite a purpose as if he still had no other resources than his fraction of the modest patrimony which on his father's death he

Digitized by Google

had shared with his brothers and sisters. This purpose had not been preponderantly to make money—it had been rather to learn something and to do something. To learn something interesting, and to do something useful—this was, roughly speaking, the programme he had sketched and of which the accident of his wife having an income appeared to him in no degree to modify the validity. He was fond of his practice, and of exercising a skill of which he was agreeably conscious, and it was so patent a truth that if he were not a doctor there was nothing else he could be, that a doctor he persisted in being, in the best possible conditions. Of course his easy domestic situation saved him a good deal of drudgery, and his wife's affiliation to the "best people" brought him a good many of those patients whose symptoms are, if not more interesting in themselves than those of the lower orders, at least more consistently displayed. He desired experience, and in the course of twenty years he got a great deal. It must be added that it came to him in some forms which, whatever might have been their intrinsic value, made it the reverse of welcome. His first child, a little boy of extraordinary promise, as the Doctor, who was not addicted to easy enthusiasm, firmly believed, died at three years of age, in spite of everything that the mother's tenderness and the father's science could invent to save him. Two years later Mrs. Sloper gave birth to a second infant—an infant of a sex which rendered the poor child, to the Doctor's sense, an inadequate substitute for his lamented first-born, of whom he had promised himself to make an admirable man. The little girl was a disappointment; but this was not the worst. A week after her birth the young mother, who, as the phrase is, had been doing well, suddenly betrayed alarming symptoms, and before another week had elapsed Austin Sloper was a widower.

For a man whose trade was to keep people alive he had certainly done poorly in his own family; and a bright doctor who within three years loses his wife and his little boy should perhaps be prepared to see either his skill or his affection impugned. Our friend, however, escaped criticism: that is, he escaped all criticism but his own, which was much the most competent and most formidable. He walked under the weight of this very private censure for the rest of his days, and bore for ever the scars of a castigation to which the strongest hand he knew had treated him on the night that followed his wife's death. The world, which, as I have said, appreciated him, pitied him too much to be ironical; his misfortune made him more interesting, and even helped him to be the fashion. It was observed that even medical families cannot escape the more insidious forms of disease, and that, after all, Doctor Sloper had lost other patients beside the two I have mentioned; which constituted an honourable precedent. His little girl remained to him, and though she was not what he had desired, he proposed to himself to make the best of her. He had on hand a stock of unexpended authority, by which the child, in its early years, profited largely. She had been

Digitized by Google

named, as a matter of course, after her poor mother, and even in her most diminutive babyhood the Doctor never called her anything but Catherine. She grew up a very robust and healthy child, and her father, as he looked at her, often said to himself that, such as she was, he at least need have no fear of losing her. I say "such as she was," because, to tell the truth—— But this is a truth of which I will defer the telling.

II.

When the child was about ten years old, he invited his sister, Mrs. Penniman, to come and stay with him. The Miss Slopers had been but two in number, and both of them had married early in life. The younger, Mrs. Almond by name, was the wife of a prosperous merchant and the mother of a blooming family. She bloomed herself, indeed, and was a comely, comfortable, reasonable woman, and a favourite with her clever brother, who, in the matter of women, even when they were nearly related to him, was a man of distinct preferences. He preferred Mrs. Almond to his sister Lavinia, who had married a poor clergyman, of a sickly constitution and a flowery style of eloquence, and then, at the age of thirty-three, had been left a widow, without children, without fortune—with nothing but the memory of Mr. Penniman's flowers of speech, a certain vague aroma of which hovered about her own conversation. Nevertheless, he had offered her a home under his own roof, which Lavinia accepted with the alacrity of a woman who had spent the ten years of her married life in the town of Poughkeepsie. The Doctor had not proposed to Mrs. Penniman to come and live with him indefinitely; he had suggested that she should make an asylum of his house while she looked about for unfurnished lodgings. It is uncertain whether Mrs. Penniman ever instituted a search for unfurnished lodgings, but it is beyond dispute that she never found them. She settled herself with her brother and never went away, and when Catherine was twenty years old her Aunt Lavinia was still one of the most striking features of her immediate *entourage*. Mrs. Penniman's own account of the matter was that she had remained to take charge of her niece's education. She had given this account, at least, to everyone but the Doctor, who never asked for explanations which he could entertain himself any day with inventing. Mrs. Penniman, moreover, though she had a good deal of a certain sort of artificial assurance, shrank, for indefinable reasons, from presenting herself to her brother as a fountain of instruction. She had not a high sense of humour, but she had enough to prevent her from making this mistake; and her brother, on his side, had enough to excuse her, in her situation, for laying him under contribution during a considerable part of a lifetime. He therefore assented tacitly to the proposition which Mrs. Penniman had tacitly laid down, that it was of importance that the poor motherless girl should have a brilliant woman near her. His assent could only be tacit, for he had never been

Digitized by Google

dazzled by his sister's intellectual lustre. Save when he fell in love with Catherine Harrington, he had never been dazzled, indeed, by any feminine characteristics whatever; and though he was to a certain extent what is called a ladies' doctor, his private opinion of the more complicated sex was not exalted. He regarded its complications as more curious than edifying, and he had an idea of the beauty of *reason*, which was on the whole meagrely gratified by what he observed in his female patients. His wife had been a reasonable woman, but she was a bright exception; among several things that he was sure of this was perhaps the principal. Such a conviction of course did little either to mitigate or to abbreviate his widowhood; and it set a limit to his recognition, at the best, of Catherine's possibilities and of Mrs. Penniman's ministrations. He nevertheless, at the end of six months, accepted his sister's permanent presence as an accomplished fact, and as Catherine grew older perceived that there were in effect good reasons why she should have a companion of her own imperfect sex. He was extremely polite to Lavinia, scrupulously, formally polite; and she had never seen him in anger but once in her life, when he lost his temper in a theological discussion with her late husband. With her he never discussed theology, nor, indeed, discussed anything; he contented himself with making known, very distinctly, in the form of a lucid ultimatum, his wishes with regard to Catherine.

Once, when the girl was about twelve years old, he had said to her——

"Try and make a clever woman of her, Lavinia; I should like her to be a clever woman."

Mrs. Penniman, at this, looked thoughtful a moment. "My dear Austin," she then inquired, "do you think it is better to be clever than to be good?"

"Good for what?" asked the Doctor. "You are good for nothing unless you are clever."

From this assertion Mrs. Penniman saw no reason to dissent; she possibly reflected that her own great use in the world was owing to her aptitude for many things.

"Of course I wish Catherine to be good," the Doctor said next day; "but she won't be any the less virtuous for not being a fool. I am not afraid of her being wicked; she will never have the salt of malice in her character. She is as good as good bread, as the French say; but six years hence I don't want to have to compare her to good bread and butter."

"Are you afraid she will be insipid? My dear brother, it is I who supply the butter; so you needn't fear!" said Mrs. Penniman, who had taken in hand the child's "accomplishments," overlooking her at the piano, where Catherine displayed a certain talent, and going with her to the dancing-class, where it must be confessed that she made but a modest figure.

Mrs. Penniman was a tall, thin, fair, rather faded woman, with a

Digitized by Google

perfectly amiable disposition, a high standard of gentility, a taste for light literature, and a certain foolish indirectness and obliquity of character. She was romantic, she was sentimental, she had a passion for little secrets and mysteries—a very innocent passion, for her secrets had hitherto always been as unpractical as addled eggs. She was not absolutely veracious; but this defect was of no great consequence, for she had never had anything to conceal. She would have liked to have a lover, and to correspond with him under an assumed name in letters left at a shop; I am bound to say that her imagination never carried the intimacy further than this. Mrs. Penniman had never had a lover, but her brother, who was very shrewd, understood her turn of mind. "When Catherine is about seventeen," he said to himself, "Lavinia will try and persuade her that some young man with a moustache is in love with her. It will be quite untrue; no young man, with a moustache or without, will ever be in love with Catherine. But Lavinia will take it up, and talk to her about it; perhaps, even, if her taste for clandestine operations doesn't prevail with her, she will talk to me about it. Catherine won't see it, and won't believe it, fortunately for her peace of mind; poor Catherine isn't romantic."

She was a healthy well-grown child, without a trace of her mother's beauty. She was not ugly; she had simply a plain, dull, gentle countenance. The most that had ever been said for her was that she had a "nice" face, and, though she was an heiress, no one had ever thought of regarding her as a belle. Her father's opinion of her moral purity was abundantly justified; she was excellently, imperturbably good; affectionate, docile, obedient, and much addicted to speaking the truth. In her younger years she was a good deal of a romp, and, though it is an awkward confession to make about one's heroine, I must add that she was something of a glutton. She never, that I know of, stole raisins out of the pantry; but she devoted her pocket-money to the purchase of cream-cakes. As regards this, however, a critical attitude would be inconsistent with a candid reference to the early annals of any biographer. Catherine was decidedly not clever; she was not quick with her book, nor, indeed, with anything else. She was not abnormally deficient, and she mustered learning enough to acquit herself respectably in conversation with her contemporaries, among whom it must be avowed, however, that she occupied a secondary place. It is well known that in New York it is possible for a young girl to occupy a primary one. Catherine, who was extremely modest, had no desire to shine, and on most social occasions, as they are called, you would have found her lurking in the background. She was extremely fond of her father and very much afraid of him; she thought him the cleverest and handsomest and most celebrated of men. The poor girl found her account so completely in the exercise of her affections that the little tremor of fear that mixed itself with her filial passion gave the thing an extra relish rather than blunted its edge. Her deepest desire was to please him, and her conception of happiness was to

Digitized by Google

know that she had succeeded in pleasing him. She had never succeeded beyond a certain point. Though on the whole he was very kind to her, she was perfectly aware of this, and to go beyond the point in question seemed to her really something to live for. What she could not know, of course, was that she disappointed him, though on three or four occasions the Doctor had been almost frank about it. She grew up peacefully and prosperously, but at the age of eighteen Mrs. Penniman had not made a clever woman of her. Doctor Sloper would have liked to be proud of his daughter; but there was nothing to be proud of in poor Catherine. There was nothing, of course, to be ashamed of; but this was not enough for the Doctor, who was a proud man and would have enjoyed being able to think of his daughter as an unusual girl. There would have been a fitness in her being pretty and graceful, intelligent and distinguished; for her mother had been the most charming woman of her little day, and as regards her father, of course he knew his own value. He had moments of irritation at having produced a commonplace child, and he even went so far at times as to take a certain satisfaction in the thought that his wife had not lived to find her out. He was naturally slow in making this discovery himself, and it was not till Catherine had become a young lady grown that he regarded the matter as settled. He gave her the benefit of a great many doubts; he was in no haste to conclude. Mrs. Penniman frequently assured him that his daughter had a delightful nature; but he knew how to interpret this assurance. It meant, to his sense, that Catherine was not wise enough to discover that her aunt was a goose—a limitation of mind that could not fail to be agreeable to Mrs. Penniman. Both she and her brother, however, exaggerated the young girl's limitations; for Catherine, though she was very fond of her aunt, and conscious of the gratitude she owed her, regarded her without a particle of that gentle dread which gave its stamp to her admiration of her father. To her mind there was nothing of the infinite about Mrs. Penniman; Catherine saw her all at once, as it were, and was not dazzled by the apparition; whereas her father's great faculties seemed, as they stretched away, to lose themselves in a sort of luminous vagueness, which indicated, not that they stopped, but that Catherine's own mind ceased to follow them.

It must not be supposed that Dr. Sloper visited his disappointment upon the poor girl, or ever let her suspect that she had played him a trick. On the contrary, for fear of being unjust to her, he did his duty with exemplary zeal, and recognised that she was a faithful and affectionate child. Besides, he was a philosopher; he smoked a good many cigars over his disappointment, and in the fullness of time he got used to it. He satisfied himself that he had expected nothing, though, indeed, with a certain oddity of reasoning. "I expect nothing," he said to himself, "so that if she gives me a surprise, it will be all clear gain. If she doesn't, it will be no loss." This was about the time Catherine had reached her eighteenth year; so that it will be seen her father had not

Digitized by Google

been precipitate. At this time she seemed not only incapable of giving surprises; it was almost a question whether she could have received one—she was so quiet and irresponsive. People who expressed themselves roughly called her stolid. But she was irresponsive because she was shy, uncomfortably, painfully shy. This was not always understood, and she sometimes produced an impression of insensibility. In reality she was the softest creature in the world.

III.

As a child she had promised to be tall, but when she was sixteen she ceased to grow, and her stature, like most other points in her composition, was not unusual. She was strong, however, and properly made, and, fortunately, her health was excellent. It has been noted that the Doctor was a philosopher, but I would not have answered for his philosophy if the poor girl had proved a sickly and suffering person. Her appearance of health constituted her principal claim to beauty, and her clear, fresh complexion, in which white and red were very equally distributed, was, indeed, an excellent thing to see. Her eye was small and quiet, her features were rather thick, her tresses brown and smooth. A dull, plain girl she was called by rigorous critics—a quiet, ladylike girl, by those of the more imaginative sort; but by neither class was she very elaborately discussed. When it had been duly impressed upon her that she was a young lady—it was a good while before she could believe it—she suddenly developed a lively taste for dress: a lively taste is quite the expression to use. I feel as if I ought to write it very small, her judgment in this matter was by no means infallible; it was liable to confusions and embarrassments. Her great indulgence of it was really the desire of a rather inarticulate nature to manifest itself; she sought to be eloquent in her garments, and to make up for her diffidence of speech by a fine frankness of costume. But if she expressed herself in her clothes it is certain that people were not to blame for not thinking her a witty person. It must be added that though she had the expectation of a fortune—Doctor Sloper for a long time had been making twenty thousand dollars a year by his profession and laying aside the half of it—the amount of money at her disposal was not greater than the allowance made to many poorer girls. In those days in New York there were still a few altar-fires flickering in the temple of Republican simplicity, and Doctor Sloper would have been glad to see his daughter present herself, with a classic grace, as a priestess of this mild faith. It made him fairly grimace, in private, to think that a child of his should be both ugly and overdressed. For himself, he was fond of the good things of life, and he made a considerable use of them; but he had a dread of vulgarity and even a theory that it was increasing in the society that surrounded him. Moreover, the standard of luxury in the United States thirty years ago was carried by no means so high as at present, and Catherine's clever father took the

Digitized by Google

old-fashioned view of the education of young persons. He had no particular theory on the subject; it had scarcely as yet become a necessity of self-defence to have a collection of theories. It simply appeared to him proper and reasonable that a well-bred young woman should not carry half her fortune on her back. Catherine's back was a broad one, and would have carried a good deal; but to the weight of the paternal displeasure she never ventured to expose it, and our heroine was twenty years old before she treated herself, for evening wear, to a red satin gown trimmed with gold fringe; though this was an article which, for many years, she had coveted in secret. It made her look, when she sported it, like a woman of thirty; but oddly enough, in spite of her taste for fine clothes, she had not a grain of coquetry, and her anxiety when she put them on was as to whether they, and not she, would look well. It is a point on which history has not been explicit, but the assumption is warrantable; it was in the royal raiment just mentioned that she presented herself at a little entertainment given by her aunt, Mrs. Almond. The girl was at this time in her twenty-first year, and Mrs. Almond's party was the beginning of something very important.

Some three or four years before this, Doctor Sloper had moved his household gods up town, as they say in New York. He had been living ever since his marriage in an edifice of red brick, with granite copings and an enormous fanlight over the door, standing in a street within five minutes' walk of the City Hall, which saw its best days (from the social point of view) about 1820. After this, the tide of fashion began to set steadily northward, as, indeed, in New York, thanks to the narrow channel in which it flows, it is obliged to do, and the great hum of traffic rolled further to the right and left of Broadway. By the time the Doctor changed his residence, the murmur of trade had become a mighty uproar, which was music in the ears of all good citizens interested in the commercial development, as they delighted to call it, of their fortunate isle. Doctor Sloper's interest in this phenomenon was only indirect—though, seeing that, as the years went on, half his patients came to be over-worked men of business, it might have been more immediate—and when most of his neighbours' dwellings (also ornamented with granite copings and large fanlights) had been converted into offices, warehouses, and shipping agencies, and otherwise applied to the base uses of commerce, he determined to look out for a quieter home. The ideal of quiet and of genteel retirement, in 1835, was found in Washington Square, where the Doctor built himself a handsome, modern, wide-fronted house, with a big balcony before the drawing-room windows, and a flight of white marble steps ascending to a portal which was also faced with white marble. This structure, and many of its neighbours, which it exactly resembled, were supposed, forty years ago, to embody the last results of architectural science, and they remain to this day very solid and honourable dwellings. In front of them was the square, containing a considerable quantity of inexpensive vegetation,

Digitized by Google

enclosed by a wooden paling, which increased its rural and accessible appearance; and round the corner was the more august precinct of the Fifth Avenue, taking its origin at this point with a spacious and confident air which already marked it for high destinies. I know not whether it is owing to the tenderness of early associations, but this portion of New York appears to many persons the most delectable. It has a kind of established repose which is not of frequent occurrence in other quarters of the long, shrill city; it has a riper, richer, more honourable look than any of the upper ramifications of the great longitudinal thoroughfare—the look of having had something of a social history. It was here, as you might have been informed on good authority, that you had come into a world which appeared to offer a variety of sources of interest; it was here that your grandmother lived, in venerable solitude, and dispensed a hospitality which commended itself alike to the infant imagination and the infant palate; it was here that you took your first walks abroad, following the nursery-maid with unequal step and sniffing up the strange odour of the alanthus-trees which at that time formed the principal umbrage of the square and diffused an aroma that you were not yet critical enough to dislike as it deserved; it was here, finally, that your first school, kept by a broad-bosomed, broad-based old lady with a ferule, who was always having tea in a blue cup, with a saucer that didn't match, enlarged the circle both of your observations and your sensations. It was here, at any rate, that my heroine spent many years of her life; which is my excuse for this topographical parenthesis.

Mrs. Almond lived much further up town, in an embryonic street, with a high number—a region where the extension of the city began to assume a theoretic air, where poplars grew beside the pavement (when there was one), and mingled their shade with the steep roofs of desultory Dutch houses, and where pigs and chickens disported themselves in the gutter. These elements of rural picturesqueness have now wholly departed from New York street scenery; but they were to be found within the memory of middle-aged persons, in quarters which now would blush to be reminded of them. Catherine had a great many cousins, and with her Aunt Almond's children, who ended by being nine in number, she lived on terms of considerable intimacy. When she was younger, they had been rather afraid of her; she was believed, as the phrase is, to be highly educated, and a person who lived in the intimacy of their Aunt Penniman had something of reflected grandeur. Mrs. Penniman, among the little Almonds, was an object of more admiration than sympathy. Her manners were strange and formidable, and her mourning robes—she dressed in black for twenty years after her husband's death, and then suddenly appeared, one morning, with pink roses in her cap—were complicated in odd, unexpected places with buckles, bugles, and pins, which discouraged familiarity. She took children too hard, both for good and for evil, and had an oppressive air of

Digitized by Google

expecting subtle things of them; so that going to see her was a good deal like being taken to church and made to sit in a front pew. It was discovered after a while, however, that Aunt Penniman was but an accident in Catherine's existence, and not a part of its essence, and that when the girl came to spend a Saturday with her cousins, she was available for "follow-my-master," and even for leap-frog. On this basis an understanding was easily arrived at, and for several years Catherine fraternised with her young kinsmen. I say young kinsmen, because seven of the little Almonds were boys, and Catherine had a preference for those games which are most conveniently played in trowsers. By degrees, however, the little Almonds' trowsers began to lengthen, and the wearers to disperse and settle themselves in life. The elder children were older than Catherine, and the boys were sent to college or placed in counting-rooms. Of the girls, one married very punctually, and the other as punctually became engaged. It was to celebrate this latter event that Mrs. Almond gave the little party I have mentioned. Her daughter was to marry a stout young stockbroker, a boy of twenty; it was thought a very good thing.

IV.

Mrs. Penniman, with more buckles and bangles than ever, came of course to the entertainment, accompanied by her niece; the Doctor, too, had promised to look in later in the evening. There was to be a good deal of dancing, and before it had gone very far, Marian Almond came up to Catherine, in company with a tall young man. She introduced the young man as a person who had a great desire to make our heroine's acquaintance, and as a cousin of Arthur Townsend, her own intended.

Marian Almond was a pretty little person of seventeen, with a very small figure and a very big sash, to the elegance of whose manners matrimony had nothing to add. She already had all the airs of a hostess, receiving the company, shaking her fan, saying that with so many people to attend to she should have no time to dance. She made a long speech about Mr. Townsend's cousin, to whom she administered a tap with her fan before turning away to other cares. Catherine had not understood all that she said; her attention was given to enjoying Marian's ease of manner and flow of ideas, and to looking at the young man, who was remarkably handsome. She had succeeded, however, as she often failed to do when people were presented to her, in catching his name, which appeared to be the same as that of Marian's little stock-broker. Catherine was always agitated by an introduction; it seemed a difficult moment, and she wondered that some people—her new acquaintance at this moment, for instance—should mind it so little. She wondered what she ought to say, and what would be the consequences of her saying nothing. The consequences at present were very agreeable. Mr.

Digitized by Google

Townsend, leaving her no time for embarrassment, began to talk to her with an easy smile, as if he had known her for a year.

"What a delightful party! What a charming house! What an interesting family! What a pretty girl your cousin is!"

These observations, in themselves of no great profundity, Mr. Townsend seemed to offer for what they were worth, and as a contribution to an acquaintance. He looked straight into Catherine's eyes. She answered nothing; she only listened, and looked at him; and he, as if he expected no particular reply, went on to say many other things in the same comfortable and natural manner. Catherine, though she felt tongue-tied, was conscious of no embarrassment; it seemed proper that he should talk, and that she should simply look at him. What made it natural was that he was so handsome, or rather, as she phrased it to herself, so beautiful. The music had been silent for a while, but it suddenly began again; and then he asked her, with a deeper, intenser smile, if she would do him the honour of dancing with them. Even to this inquiry she gave no audible assent; she simply let him put his arm round her waist—as she did so it occurred to her more vividly than it had ever done before that this was a singular place for a gentleman's arm to be—and in a moment he was guiding her round the room in the harmonious rotation of the polka. When they paused, she felt that she was red; and then, for some moments, she stopped looking at him. She fanned herself, and looked at the flowers that were painted on her fan. He asked her if she would begin again, and she hesitated to answer, still looking at the flowers.

"Does it make you dizzy?" he asked, in a tone of great kindness.

Then Catherine looked up at him; he was certainly beautiful, and not at all red. "Yes," she said; she hardly knew why, for dancing had never made her dizzy.

"Ah, well, in that case," said Mr. Townsend, "we will sit still and talk. I will find a good place to sit."

He found a good place—a charming place; a little sofa that seemed meant only for two persons. The rooms by this time were very full; the dancers increased in number, and people stood close in front of them, turning their backs, so that Catherine and her companion seemed secluded and unobserved. "*We* will talk," the young man had said; but he still did all the talking. Catherine leaned back in her place, with her eyes fixed upon him, smiling and thinking him very clever. He had features like young men in pictures; Catherine had never seen such features—so delicate, so chiselled and finished—among the young New Yorkers whom she passed in the streets and met at dancing parties. He was tall and slim, but he looked extremely strong. Catherine thought he looked like a statue. But a statue would not talk like that, and, above all, would not have eyes of so rare a colour. He had never been at Mrs. Almond's before; he felt very much like a stranger; and it was very kind of Catherine to take pity on him. He was Arthur Towns-

Digitized by Google

end's cousin—not very near; several times removed—and Arthur had brought him to present him to the family. In fact, he was a great stranger in New York. It was his native place; but he had not been there for many years. He had been knocking about the world, and living in queer corners; he had only come back a month or two before. New York was very pleasant, only he felt lonely.

"You see, people forget you," he said, smiling at Catherine with his delightful gaze, while he leaned forward obliquely, turning towards her, with his elbows on his knees.

It seemed to Catherine that no one who had once seen him would ever forget him; but though she made this reflection she kept it to herself, almost as you would keep something precious.

They sat there for some time. He was very amusing. He asked her about the people that were near them; he tried to guess who some of them were, and he made the most laughable mistakes. He criticised them very freely, in a positive, off-hand way. Catherine had never heard any one—especially any young man—talk just like that. It was the way a young man might talk in a novel; or better still, in a play, on the stage, close before the footlights, looking at the audience, and with everyone looking at him, so that you wondered at his presence of mind. And yet Mr. Townsend was not like an actor; he seemed so sincere, so natural. This was very interesting; but in the midst of it, Marian Almond came pushing through the crowd, with a little ironical cry, when she found these young people still together, which made everyone turn round, and cost Catherine a conscious blush. Marian broke up their talk, and told Mr. Townsend—whom she treated as if she were already married and he had become her cousin—to run away to her mother, who had been wishing for the last half-hour to introduce him to Mr. Almond.

"We shall meet again!" he said to Catherine as he left her, and Catherine thought it a very original speech.

Her cousin took her by the arm, and made her walk about. "I needn't ask you what you think of Morris!" the young girl exclaimed.

"Is that his name?"

"I don't ask you what you think of his name, but what you think of himself," said Marian.

"Oh, nothing particular!" Catherine answered, dissembling for the first time in her life.

"I have half a mind to tell him that!" cried Marian. "It will do him good. He's so terribly conceited."

"Conceited?" said Catherine, staring.

"So Arthur says, and Arthur knows about him."

"Oh, don't tell him!" Catherine murmured imploringly.

"Don't tell him he's conceited? I have told him so a dozen times."

At this profession of audacity, Catherine looked down at her little companion in amazement. She supposed it was because Marian was

Digitized by Google

going to be married that she took so much on herself; but she wondered too, whether, when she herself should become engaged, such exploits would be expected of her.

Half an hour later she saw her aunt Penniman sitting in the embrasure of a window, with her head a little on one side, and her gold eyeglass raised to her eyes, which were wandering about the room. In front of her was a gentleman, bending forward a little, with his back turned to Catherine. She knew his back immediately, though she had never seen it; for when he left her, at Marian's instigation, he had retreated in the best order, without turning round. Morris Townsend—the name had already become very familiar to her, as if some one had been repeating it in her ear for the last half hour—Morris Townsend was giving his impressions of the company to her aunt, as he had done to herself; he was saying clever things, and Mrs. Penniman was smiling, as if she approved of them. As soon as Catherine had perceived this she moved away; she would not have liked him to turn round and see her. But it gave her pleasure—the whole thing. That he should talk with Mrs. Penniman, with whom she lived and whom she saw and talked with every day—that seemed to keep him near her, and to make him even easier to contemplate than if she herself had been the object of his civilities; and that Aunt Lavinia should like him, should not be shocked or startled by what he said, this also appeared to the girl a personal gain; for Aunt Lavinia's standard was extremely high, planted as it was over the grave of her late husband, in which, as she had convinced everyone, the very genius of conversation was buried. One of the Almond boys, as Catherine called them, invited our heroine to dance a quadrille, and for a quarter of an hour her feet at least were occupied. This time she was not dizzy; her head was very clear. Just when the dance was over, she found herself in the crowd face to face with her father. Doctor Sloper had usually a little smile, never a very big one, and with this little smile playing in his clear eyes and on his neatly-shaved lips, he looked at his daughter's crimson gown.

"Is it possible that this magnificent person is my child?" he said.

You would have surprised him if you had told him so; but it is a literal fact that he almost never addressed his daughter save in the ironical form. Whenever he addressed her he gave her pleasure; but she had to cut her pleasure out of the piece, as it were. There were portions left over, light remnants and snippets of irony, which she never knew what to do with, which seemed too delicate for her own use; and yet Catherine, lamenting the limitations of her understanding, felt that they were too valuable to waste, and had a belief that if they passed over her head they yet contributed to the general sum of human wisdom.

"I am not magnificent," she said, mildly, wishing that she had put on another dress.

"You are sumptuous, opulent, expensive," her father rejoined. "You look as if you had eighty thousand a year."

Digitized by Google

"Well, so long as I haven't——" said Catherine illogically. Her conception of her prospective wealth was as yet very indefinite.

"So long as you haven't you shouldn't look as if you had. Have you enjoyed your party?"

Catherine hesitated a moment; and then, looking away, "I am rather tired," she murmured. I have said that this entertainment was the beginning of something important for Catherine. For the second time in her life she made an indirect answer; and the beginning of a period of dissimulation is certainly a significant date. Catherine was not so easily tired as that.

Nevertheless, in the carriage, as they drove home, she was as quiet as if fatigue had been her portion. Doctor Sloper's manner of addressing his sister Lavinia had a good deal of resemblance to the tone he had adopted towards Catherine.

"Who was the young man that was making love to you?" he presently asked.

"Oh, my good brother!" murmured Mrs. Penniman, in deprecation.

"He seemed uncommonly tender. Whenever I looked at you, for half an hour, he had the most devoted air."

"The devotion was not to me," said Mrs. Penniman. "It was to Catherine; he talked to me of her."

Catherine had been listening with all her ears. "Oh, Aunt Penniman!" she exclaimed faintly.

"He is very handsome; he is very clever; he expressed himself with a great deal—a great deal of felicity," her aunt went on.

"He is in love with this regal creature, then?" the Doctor inquired humorously.

"Oh, father," cried the girl, still more faintly, devoutly thankful the carriage was dark.

"I don't know that; but he admired her dress."

Catherine did not say to herself in the dark, "My dress only?" Mrs. Penniman's announcement struck her by its richness, not by its meagreness.

"You see," said her father, "he thinks you have eighty thousand a year."

"I don't believe he thinks of that," said Mrs. Penniman; "he is too refined."

"He must be tremendously refined not to think of that!"

"Well, he is!" Catherine exclaimed, before she knew it.

"I thought you had gone to sleep," her father answered. "The hour has come!" he added to himself. "Lavinia is going to get up a romance for Catherine. It's a shame to play such tricks on the girl. What is the gentleman's name?" he went on, aloud.

"I didn't catch it, and I didn't like to ask him. He asked to be introduced to me," said Mrs. Penniman, with a certain grandeur; "but

Digitized by Google

you know how indistinctly Jefferson speaks." Jefferson was Mr. Almond. "Catherine, dear, what was the gentleman's name?"

For a minute, if it had not been for the rumbling of the carriage, you might have heard a pin drop.

"I don't know, Aunt Lavinia," said Catherine, very softly. And, with all his irony, her father believed her.

V.

He learned what he had asked some three or four days later, after Morris Townsend, with his cousin, had called in Washington Square. Mrs. Penniman did not tell her brother, on the drive home, that she had intimated to this agreeable young man, whose name she did not know, that, with her niece, she should be very glad to see him; but she was greatly pleased, and even a little flattered, when, late on a Sunday afternoon, the two gentlemen made their appearance. His coming with Arthur Townsend made it more natural and easy; the latter young man was on the point of becoming connected with the family, and Mrs. Penniman had remarked to Catherine that, as he was going to marry Marian, it would be polite in him to call. These events came to pass late in the autumn, and Catherine and her aunt had been sitting together in the closing dusk, by the firelight, in the high back-parlour.

Arthur Townsend fell to Catherine's portion, while his companion placed himself on the sofa, beside Mrs. Penniman. Catherine had hitherto not been a harsh critic; she was easy to please—she liked to talk with young men. But Marian's betrothed, this evening, made her feel vaguely fastidious; he sat looking at the fire and rubbing his knees with his hands. As for Catherine, she scarcely even pretended to keep up the conversation; her attention had fixed itself on the other side of the room; she was listening to what went on between the other Mr. Townsend and her aunt. Every now and then, he looked over at Catherine herself and smiled, as if to show that what he said was for her benefit too. Catherine would have liked to change her place, to go and sit near them, where she might see and hear him better. But she was afraid of seeming bold—of looking eager; and, besides, it would not have been polite to Marian's little suitor. She wondered why the other gentleman had picked out her aunt—how he came to have so much to say to Mrs. Penniman, to whom, usually, young men were not especially devoted. She was not at all jealous of Aunt Lavinia, but she was a little envious, and above all she wondered; for Morris Townsend was an object on which she found that her imagination could exercise itself indefinitely. His cousin had been describing a house that he had taken in view of his union with Marian, and the domestic conveniences he meant to introduce into it; how Marian wanted a larger one, and Mrs. Almond recommended a smaller one, and how he himself was convinced that he had got the neatest house in New York.

Digitized by Google

"It doesn't matter," he said; "it's only for three or four years. At the end of three or four years we'll move. That's the way to live in New York—to move every three or four years. Then you always get the last thing. It's because the city's growing so quick—you've got to keep up with it. It's going straight up town—that's where New York's going. If I wasn't afraid Marian would be lonely, I'd go up there—right up to the top—and wait for it. Only have to wait ten years—they'd all come up after you. But Marian says she wants some neighbours—she doesn't want to be a pioneer. She says that if she's got to be the first settler she had better go out to Minnesota. I guess we'll move up little by little; when we get tired of one street we'll go higher. So you see we'll always have a new house; it's a great advantage to have a new house; you get all the latest improvements. They invent everything all over again about every five years, and it's a great thing to keep up with the new things. I always try and keep up with the new things of every kind. Don't you think that's a good motto for a young couple—to keep 'going higher?' What's the name of that piece of poetry—what do they call it?—*Excelsior!*"

Catherine bestowed on her junior visitor only just enough attention to feel that this was not the way Mr. Morris Townsend had talked the other night, or that he was talking now to her fortunate aunt. But suddenly his aspiring kinsman became more interesting. He seemed to have become conscious that she was affected by his companion's presence, and he thought it proper to explain it.

"My cousin asked me to bring him, or I shouldn't have taken the liberty. He seemed to want very much to come; you know he's awfully sociable. I told him I wanted to ask you first, but he said Mrs. Penniman had invited him. He isn't particular what he says when he wants to come somewhere! But Mrs. Penniman seems to think it's all right."

"We are very glad to see him," said Catherine. And she wished to talk more about him; but she hardly knew what to say. "I never saw him before," she went on, presently.

Arthur Townsend stared.

"Why, he told me he talked with you for over half an hour the other night."

"I mean before the other night. That was the first time."

"Oh, he has been away from New York—he has been all round the world. He doesn't know many people here, but he's very sociable, and he wants to know everyone."

"Everyone?" said Catherine.

"Well, I mean all the good ones. All the pretty young ladies—like Mrs. Penniman!" And Arthur Townsend gave a private laugh.

"My aunt likes him very much," said Catherine.

"Most people like him—he's so brilliant."

"He's more like a foreigner," Catherine suggested.

Digitized by Google

"Well, I never knew a foreigner!" said young Townsend, in a tone which seemed to indicate that his ignorance had been optional.

"Neither have I," Catherine confessed, with more humility. "They say they are generally brilliant," she added, vaguely.

"Well, the people of this city are clever enough for me. I know some of them that think they are too clever for me; but they ain't!"

"I suppose you can't be too clever," said Catherine, still with humility.

"I don't know. I know some people that call my cousin too clever."

Catherine listened to this statement with extreme interest, and a feeling that if Morris Townsend had a fault it would naturally be that one. But she did not commit herself, and in a moment she asked:—"Now that he has come back, will he stay here always?"

"Ah," said Arthur, "if he can get something to do."

"Something to do?"

"Some place or other; some business."

"Hasn't he got any?" said Catherine, who had never heard of a young man—of the upper class—in this situation.

"No; he's looking round. But he can't find anything."

"I am very sorry," Catherine permitted herself to observe.

"Oh, he doesn't mind," said young Townsend. "He takes it easy—he isn't in a hurry. He is very particular."

Catherine thought he naturally would be, and gave herself up for some moments to the contemplation of this idea, in several of its bearings.

"Won't his father take him into his business—his office?" she at last inquired.

"He hasn't got any father—he has only got a sister. Your sister can't help you much."

It seemed to Catherine that if she were his sister she would disprove this axiom. "Is she—is she pleasant?" she asked in a moment.

"I don't know—I believe she's very respectable," said young Townsend. And then he looked across to his cousin and began to laugh. "I say, we are talking about you," he added.

Morris Townsend paused in his conversation with Mrs. Penniman, and stared, with a little smile. Then he got up, as if he were going.

"As far as you are concerned, I can't return the compliment," he said to Catherine's companion. "But as regards Miss Sloper, it's another affair."

Catherine thought this little speech wonderfully well turned; but she was embarrassed by it, and she also got up. Morris Townsend stood looking at her and smiling; he put out his hand for farewell. He was going, without having said anything to her; but even on these terms she was glad to have seen him.

"I will tell her what you have said—when you go!" said Mrs. Penniman, with a little significant laugh.

Catherine blushed, for she felt almost as if they were making sport of her. What in the world could this beautiful young man have said? He

Digitized by Google

looked at her still, in spite of her blush; but very kindly and respectfully.

"I have had no talk with you," he said, "and that was what I came for. But it will be a good reason for coming another time; a little pretext—if I am obliged to give one. I am not afraid of what your aunt will say when I go."

With this the two young men took their departure; after which Catherine, with her blush still lingering, directed a serious and interrogative eye to Mrs. Penniman. She was incapable of elaborate artifice, and she resorted to no jocular device—to no affectation of the belief that she had been maligned—to learn what she desired.

"What did you say you would tell me?" she asked.

Mrs. Penniman came up to her, smiling and nodding a little, looked at her all over, and gave a twist to the knot of ribbon in her neck. "It's a great secret, my dear child; but he is coming a-courting!"

Catherine was serious still. "Is that what he told you!"

"He didn't say so exactly. But he left me to guess it. I'm a good guesser."

"Do you mean a-courting me?"

"Not me, certainly, miss; though I must say he is a hundred times more polite to a person who has no longer extreme youth to recommend her than most of the young men. He is thinking of some one else." And Mrs. Penniman gave her niece a delicate little kiss. "You must be very gracious to him."

Catherine stared—she was bewildered. "I don't understand you," she said; "he doesn't know me."

"Oh yes, he does; more than you think. I have told him all about you."

"Oh, Aunt Penniman!" murmured Catherine, as if this had been a breach of trust. "He is a perfect stranger—we don't know him." There was infinite modesty in the poor girl's "we."

Aunt Penniman, however, took no account of it; she spoke even with a touch of acrimony. "My dear Catherine, you know very well that you admire him!"

"Oh, Aunt Penniman!" Catherine could only murmur again. It might very well be that she admired him—though this did not seem to her a thing to talk about. But that this brilliant stranger—this sudden apparition, who had barely heard the sound of her voice—took that sort of interest in her that was expressed by the romantic phrase of which Mrs. Penniman had just made use: this could only be a figment of the restless brain of Aunt Lavinia, whom everyone knew to be a woman of powerful imagination.

VI.

Mrs. Penniman even took for granted at times that other people had as much imagination as herself; so that when, half an hour later, her brother came in, she addressed him quite on this principle.

Digitized by Google

"He has just been here, Austin; it's such a pity you missed him."

"Whom in the world have I missed?" asked the Doctor.

"Mr. Morris Townsend; he has made us such a delightful visit."

"And who in the world is Mr. Morris Townsend?"

"Aunt Penniman means the gentleman—the gentleman whose name I couldn't remember," said Catherine.

"The gentleman at Elizabeth's party who was so struck with Catherine," Mrs. Penniman added.

"Oh, his name is Morris Townsend, is it? And did he come here to propose to you?"

"Oh, father," murmured the girl for all answer, turning away to the window, where the dusk had deepened to darkness.

"I hope he won't do that without your permission," said Mrs. Penniman, very graciously.

"After all, my dear, he seems to have yours," her brother answered.

Lavinia simpered, as if this might not be quite enough, and Catherine, with her forehead touching the window-panes, listened to this exchange of epigrams as reservedly as if they had not each been a pin-prick in her own destiny.

"The next time he comes," the Doctor added, "you had better call me. He might like to see me."

Morris Townsend came again, some five days afterwards; but Doctor Sloper was not called, as he was absent from home at the time. Catherine was with her aunt when the young man's name was brought in, and Mrs. Penniman, effacing herself and protesting, made a great point of her niece's going into the drawing-room alone.

"This time it's for you—for you only," she said. "Before, when he talked to me, it was only preliminary—it was to gain my confidence. Literally, my dear, I should not have the *courage* to show myself to-day."

And this was perfectly true. Mrs. Penniman was not a brave woman, and Morris Townsend had struck her as a young man of great force of character, and of remarkable powers of satire; a keen, resolute, brilliant nature, with which one must exercise a great deal of tact. She said to herself that he was "imperious," and she liked the word and the idea. She was not the least jealous of her niece, and she had been perfectly happy with Mr. Penniman, but in the bottom of her heart she permitted herself the observation: "That's the sort of husband I should have had!" He was certainly much more imperious—she ended by calling it imperial—than Mr. Penniman.

So Catherine saw Mr. Townsend alone, and her aunt did not come in even at the end of the visit. The visit was a long one; he sat there—in the front parlour, in the biggest arm-chair—for more than an hour. He seemed more at home this time—more familiar; lounging a little in the chair, slapping a cushion that was near him with his stick, and looking round the room a good deal, and at the objects it contained, as well as at

Digitized by Google

Catherine; whom, however, he also contemplated freely. There was a smile of respectful devotion in his handsome eyes which seemed to Catherine almost solemnly beautiful; it made her think of a young knight in a poem. His talk, however, was not particularly knightly; it was light and easy and friendly; it took a practical turn, and he asked a number of questions about herself—what were her tastes—if she liked this and that—what were her habits. He said to her, with his charming smile, "Tell me about yourself; give me a little sketch." Catherine had very little to tell, and she had no talent for sketching; but before he went she had confided to him that she had a secret passion for the theatre, which had been but scantily gratified, and a taste for operatic music—that of Bellini and Donizetti, in especial (it must be remembered in extenuation of this primitive young woman that she held these opinions in an age of general darkness)—which she rarely had an occasion to hear, except on the hand-organ. She confessed that she was not particularly fond of literature. Morris Townsend agreed with her that books were tiresome things; only, as he said, you had to read a good many before you found it out. He had been to places that people had written books about, and they were not a bit like the descriptions. To see for yourself—that was the great thing; he always tried to see for himself. He had seen all the principal actors—he had been to all the best theatres in London and Paris. But the actors were always like the authors—they always exaggerated. He liked every thing to be natural. Suddenly he stopped, looking at Catherine with his smile.

"That's what I like you for; you are so natural! Excuse me," he added; "you see I am natural myself!"

And before she had time to think whether she excused him or not—which afterwards, at leisure, she became conscious that she did—he began to talk about music, and to say that it was his greatest pleasure in life. He had heard all the great singers in Paris and London—Pasta and Rubini and Lablache—and when you had done that, you could say that you knew what singing was.

"I sing a little myself," he said; "some day I will show you. Not to-day, but some other time."

And then he got up to go; he had omitted, by accident, to say that he would sing to her if she would play to him. He thought of this after he got into the street; but he might have spared his compunction, for Catherine had not noticed the lapse. She was thinking only that "some other time" had a delightful sound; it seemed to spread itself over the future.

This was all the more reason, however, though she was ashamed and uncomfortable, why she should tell her father that Mr. Morris Townsend had called again. She announced the fact abruptly, almost violently, as soon as the Doctor came into the house; and having done so—it was her duty—she took measures to leave the room. But

Digitized by Google

she could not leave it fast enough; her father stopped her just as she reached the door.

"Well, my dear, did he propose to you to-day?" the Doctor asked.

This was just what she had been afraid he would say; and yet she had no answer ready. Of course she would have liked to take it as a joke—as her father must have meant it; and yet she would have liked, also, in denying it, to be a little positive, a little sharp, so that he would perhaps not ask the question again. She didn't like it—it made her unhappy. But Catherine could never be sharp; and for a moment she only stood, with her hand on the door-knob, looking at her satiric parent, and giving a little laugh.

"Decidedly," said the Doctor to himself, "my daughter is not brilliant!"

But he had no sooner made this reflection than Catherine found something; she had decided on the whole to take the thing as a joke.

"Perhaps he will do it the next time!" she exclaimed, with a repetition of her laugh. And she quickly got out of the room.

The Doctor stood staring; he wondered whether his daughter were serious. Catherine went straight to her own room, and by the time she reached it she bethought herself that there was something else—something better—she might have said. She almost wished, now, that her father would ask his question again, so that she might reply:—"Oh yes, Mr. Morris Townsend proposed to me, and I refused him!"

The Doctor, however, began to put his questions elsewhere; it naturally having occurred to him that he ought to inform himself properly about this handsome young man who had formed the habit of running in and out of his house. He addressed himself to the elder of his sisters, Mrs. Almond—not going to her for the purpose; there was no such hurry as that; but having made a note of the matter for the first opportunity. The Doctor was never eager, never impatient nor nervous; but he made notes of everything, and he regularly consulted his notes. Among them the information he obtained from Mrs. Almond about Morris Townsend took its place.

"Lavinia has already been to ask me," she said. "Lavinia is most excited; I don't understand it. It's not, after all, Lavinia that the young man is supposed to have designs upon. She is very peculiar."

"Ah, my dear," the Doctor replied, "she has not lived with me these twelve years without my finding it out!"

"She has got such an artificial mind," said Mrs. Almond, who always enjoyed an opportunity to discuss Lavinia's peculiarities with her brother. "She didn't want me to tell you that she had asked me about Mr. Townsend; but I told her I would. She always wants to conceal everything."

"And yet at moments no one blurts things out with such crudity. She is like a revolving lighthouse; pitch darkness alternating with a dazzling brilliancy! But what did you tell her?" the Doctor asked.

"What I tell you; that I know very little of him."

Digitized by Google

"Lavinia must have been disappointed at that," said the Doctor; "she would prefer him to have been guilty of some romantic crime. However, we must make the best of people. They tell me our gentleman is the cousin of the little boy to whom you are about to entrust the future of your little girl."

"Arthur is not a little boy; he is a very old man, you and I will never be so old. He is a distant relation of Lavinia's *protégé*. The name is the same, but I am given to understand that there are Townsends and Townsends. So Arthur's mother tells me; she talked about 'branches'—younger branches, elder branches, inferior branches—as if it were a royal house. Arthur, it appears, is of the reigning line, but poor Lavinia's young man is not. Beyond this, Arthur's mother knows very little about him; she has only a vague story that he has been 'wild.' But I know his sister a little, and she is a very nice woman. Her name is Mrs. Montgomery; she is a widow, with a little property and five children. She lives in the Second Avenue."

"What does Mrs. Montgomery say about him?"

"That he has talents by which he might distinguish himself."

"Only he is lazy, eh?"

"She doesn't say so."

"That's family pride," said the Doctor. "What is his profession?"

"He hasn't got any; he is looking for something. I believe he was once in the Navy."

"Once? What is his age?"

"I suppose he is upwards of thirty. He must have gone into the Navy very young. I think Arthur told me that he inherited a small property—which was perhaps the cause of his leaving the Navy—and that he spent it all in a few years. He travelled all over the world, lived abroad, amused himself. I believe it was a kind of system, a theory he had. He has lately come back to America, with the intention, as he tells Arthur, of beginning life in earnest."

"Is he in earnest about Catherine, then?"

"I don't see why you should be incredulous," said Mrs. Almond. "It seems to me that you have never done Catherine justice. You must remember that she has the prospect of thirty thousand a year."

The Doctor looked at his sister a moment, and then, with the lightest touch of bitterness:—"You at least appreciate her," he said.

Mrs Almond blushed.

"I don't mean that is her only merit; I simply mean that it is a great one. A great many young men think so; and you appear to me never to have been properly aware of that. You have always had a little way of alluding to her as an unmarriageable girl."

"My allusions are as kind as yours, Elizabeth," said the Doctor, frankly. "How many suitors has Catherine had, with all her expectations—how much attention has she ever received? Catherine is not unmarriageable, but she is absolutely unattractive. What other reason is

Digitized by Google

there for Lavinia being so charmed with the idea that there is a lover in the house? There has never been one before, and Lavinia, with her sensitive, sympathetic nature, is not used to the idea. It affects her imagination. I must do the young men of New York the justice to say that they strike me as very disinterested. They prefer pretty girls —lively girls—girls like your own. Catherine is neither pretty nor lively."

"Catherine does very well; she has a style of her own—which is more than my poor Marian has, who has no style at all," said Mrs. Almond. "The reason Catherine has received so little attention is that she seems to all the young men to be older than themselves. She is so large, and she dresses—so richly. They are rather afraid of her, I think; she looks as if she had been married already, and you know they don't like married women. And if our young men appear disinterested," the Doctor's wiser sister went on, "it is because they marry, as a general thing, so young, before twenty-five, at the age of innocence and sincerity, before the age of calculation. If they only waited a little, Catherine would fare better."

"As a calculation? Thank you very much," said the Doctor.

"Wait till some intelligent man of forty comes along, and he will be delighted with Catherine," Mrs. Almond continued.

"Mr. Townsend is not old enough, then; his motives may be pure."

"It is very possible that his motives are pure; I should be very sorry to take the contrary for granted. Lavinia is sure of it, and, as he is a very prepossessing youth, you might give him the benefit of the doubt."

Doctor Sloper reflected a moment.

"What are his present means of subsistence?"

"I have no idea. He lives, as I say, with his sister."

"A widow, with five children? Do you mean he lives *upon* her?"

Mrs. Almond got up, and with a certain impatience: "Had you not better ask Mrs. Montgomery herself?" she inquired.

"Perhaps I may come to that," said the Doctor. "Did you say the Second Avenue?" He made a note of the Second Avenue.

HENRY JAMES, Jr.

Digitized by Google

Henry David Thoreau: His Character and Opinions.

I.

THOREAU'S thin, penetrating, big-nosed face, even in a bad woodcut, conveys some hint of the limitations of his mind and character. With his almost acid sharpness of insight, with his almost animal dexterity in act, there went none of that large, unconscious geniality of the world's heroes. He was not easy, not ample, not urbane, not even kind; his enjoyment was hardly smiling, or the smile was not broad enough to be convincing; he had no waste lands nor kitchen-midden in his nature, but was all improved and sharpened to a point. "He was bred to no profession," says Emerson; "he never married; he lived alone; he never went to church; he never voted; he refused to pay a tax to the state; he ate no flesh, he drank no wine, he never knew the use of tobacco; and, though a naturalist, he used neither trap nor gun. When asked at dinner what dish he preferred, he answered, 'The nearest.'" So many negative superiorities begin to smack a little of the prig. From his later works he was in the habit of cutting out the humorous passages, under the impression that they were beneath the dignity of his moral muse; and there we see the prig stand public and confessed. It was "much easier," says Emerson acutely, much easier for Thoreau to say *no* than *yes*; and that is a characteristic which depicts the man. It is a useful accomplishment to be able to say *no*, but surely it is the essence of amiability to prefer to say *yes* where it is possible. There is something wanting in the man who does not hate himself whenever he is constrained to say no. And there was a great deal wanting in this born dissenter. He was almost shockingly devoid of weaknesses; he had not enough of them to be truly polar with humanity; whether you call him demi-god or demi-man, he was at least not altogether one of us, for he was not touched with a feeling of our infirmities. The world's heroes have room for all positive qualities, even those which are disreputable, in the capacious theatre of their dispositions. Such can live many lives; while a Thoreau can live but one, and that only with perpetual foresight.

He was no ascetic, rather an Epicurean of the nobler sort; and he had this one great merit, that he succeeded so far as to be happy. love my fate to the core and rind," he wrote once; and even while he lay dying, here is what he dictated (for it seems he was already too feeble to control the pen): "You ask particularly after my health. I *suppose* that I have not many months to live, but of course know nothing about it. I may say that I am enjoying existence as much as ever, and regret nothing." It is not given to all to bear so clear a testimony to the

Digitized by Google

sweetness of their fate, nor to any without courage and wisdom; for this world in itself is but a painful and uneasy place of residence, and lasting happiness, at least to the self-conscious, comes only from within. Now Thoreau's content and ecstasy in living was, we may say, like a plant that he had watered and tended with womanish solicitude; for there is apt to be something unmanly, something almost dastardly, in a life that does not move with dash and freedom, and that fears the bracing contact of the world. In one word, Thoreau was a skulker. He did not wish virtue to go out of him among his fellow-men, but slunk into a corner to hoard it for himself. He left all for the sake of certain virtuous self-indulgences. It is true that his tastes were noble; that his ruling passion was to keep himself unspotted from the world; and that his luxuries were all of the same healthy order as cold tubs and early rising. But a man may be both coldly cruel in the pursuit of goodness, and morbid even in the pursuit of health. I cannot lay my hands on the passage in which he explains his abstinence from tea and coffee, but I am sure I have the meaning correctly. It is this: He thought it bad economy and worthy of no true virtuoso to spoil the natural rapture of the morning with such muddy stimulants; let him but see the sun rise, and he was already sufficiently inspirited for the labours of the day. That may be reason good enough to abstain from tea; but when we go on to find the same man, on the same or similar grounds, abstain from nearly everything that his neighbours innocently and pleasurably use, and from the rubs and trials of human society itself into the bargain, we recognise that valetudinarian healthfulness which is more delicate than sickness itself. We need have no respect for a state of artificial training. True health is to be able to do without it. Shakespeare, we can imagine, might begin the day upon a quart of ale, and yet enjoy the sunrise to the full as much as Thoreau, and commemorate his enjoyment in vastly better verses. A man who must separate himself from his neighbours' habits in order to be happy, is in much the same case with one who requires to take opium for the same purpose. What we want to see is one who can breast into the world, do a man's work, and still preserve his first and pure enjoyment of existence.

Thoreau's faculties were of a piece with his moral shyness; for they were all delicacies. He could guide himself about the woods on the darkest night by the touch of his feet. He could pick up an exact dozen of pencils by the feeling, pace distances with accuracy, and gauge cubic contents by the eye. His smell was so dainty that he could perceive the fœtor of dwelling-houses as he passed them by at night; his palate so unsophisticated that, like a child, he disliked the taste of wine—or perhaps, living in America, had never tasted any that was good; and his knowledge of nature was so complete and curious that he could have told the time of year, within a day or so, by the aspect of the plants. In his dealings with animals, he was the original of Hawthorne's Donatello. He pulled the woodchuck out of its hole by the tail; the hunted fox

Digitized by Google

came to him for protection; wild squirrels have been seen to nestle in his waistcoat; he would stoop his face into a pool and bring forth a bright, panting fish, lying undismayed in the palm of his hand. There were few things that he could not do. He could make a house, a boat, a pencil, or a book. He was a surveyor, a scholar, a natural historian. He could run, walk, climb, skate, swim, and manage a boat. The smallest occasion served to display his physical accomplishment; and a manufacturer, from merely observing his dexterity with the window of a railway carriage, offered him a situation on the spot. "The only fruit of much living," he observes, "is the ability to do some slight thing better." But such was the exactitude of his senses, so alive was he in every fibre, that it seems as if the maxim should be changed in his case, for he could do most things with unusual perfection. And perhaps he had an approving eye to himself when he wrote: "Though the youth at last grows indifferent, the laws of the universe are not indifferent, *but are for ever on the side of the most sensitive.*"

II.

Thoreau had decided, it would seem, from the very first to lead a life of self-improvement: the needle did not tremble as with richer natures, but pointed steadily north; and as he saw duty and inclination in one, he turned all his strength in that direction. He was met upon the threshold by a common difficulty. In this world, in spite of its many agreeable features, even the most sensitive must undergo some drudgery to live. It is not possible to devote your time to study and meditation without what are quaintly but happily denominated private means; these absent, a man must contrive to earn his bread by some service to the public such as the public cares to pay him for; or, as Thoreau loved to put it, Apollo must serve Admetus. This was to Thoreau even a sourer necessity than it is to most; there was a love of freedom, a strain of the wild man, in his nature, that rebelled with violence against the yoke of custom; and he was so eager to cultivate himself and to be happy in his own society, that he could consent with difficulty even to the interruptions of friendship. "*Such are my engagements to myself* that I dare not promise," he once wrote in answer to an invitation; and the italics are his own. Marcus Aurelius found time to study virtue, and between whiles to conduct the imperial affairs of Rome; but Thoreau is so busy improving himself, that he must think twice about a morning call. And now imagine him condemned for eight hours a day to some uncongenial and unmeaning business! He shrank from the very look of the mechanical in life; all should, if possible, be sweetly spontaneous and swimmingly progressive. Thus he learned to make lead-pencils, and, when he had gained the best certificate and his friends began to congratulate him on his establishment in life, calmly announced that he should never make another. "Why should I?" said he; "I would not do again what I have done once." For when a thing has once been done as well as it

Digitized by Google

wants to be, it is of no further interest to the self-improver. Yet in after years, and when it became needful to support his family, he returned patiently to this mechanical art—a step more than worthy of himself.

The pencils seem to have been Apollo's first experiment in the service of Admetus; but others followed. "I have thoroughly tried school-keeping," he writes, "and found that my expenses were in proportion, or rather out of proportion, to my income; for I was obliged to dress and train, not to say think and believe, accordingly, and I lost my time into the bargain. As I did not teach for the benefit of my fellow-men, but simply for a livelihood, this was a failure. I have tried trade; but I found that it would take ten years to get under way in that, and that then I should probably be on my way to the devil." Nothing, indeed, can surpass his scorn for all so-called business. Upon that subject, gall squirts from him at a touch. "The whole enterprise of this nation is not illustrated by a thought," he writes; "it is not warmed by a sentiment; there is nothing in it for which a man should lay down his life, nor even his gloves." And again: "If our merchants did not most of them fail, and the banks too, my faith in the old laws of this world would be staggered. The statement that ninety-six in a hundred doing such business surely break down is perhaps the sweetest fact that statistics have revealed." The wish was probably father to the figures; but there is something enlivening in a hatred of so genuine a brand, hot as Corsican revenge and sneering like Voltaire.

Pencils, school-keeping, and trade being thus discarded one after another, Thoreau, with a stroke of strategy, turned the position. He saw his way to get his board and lodging for practically nothing; and Admetus never got got less work out of any servant since the world began. It was his ambition to be an oriental philosopher; but he was always a very Yankee sort of oriental. Even in the peculiar attitude in which he stood to money, his system of personal economics, as we may call it, he displayed a vast amount of truly down-east calculation, and he adopted poverty like a piece of business. Yet his system is based on one or two ideas which, I believe, come naturally to all thoughtful youths, and are only pounded out of them by city uncles. Indeed, something essentially youthful distinguishes all Thoreau's knock-down blows at current opinion. Like the posers of a child, they leave the orthodox in a kind of speechless agony. These know the thing is nonsense. They are sure there must be an answer, yet somehow cannot find it. So it is with his system of economy. He cuts through the subject on so new a plane that the accepted arguments apply no longer; he attacks it in a new dialect where there are no catchwords ready made for the defender; after you have been boxing or years on a polite, gladiatorial convention, here is an assailant who does not scruple to hit below the belt.

"The cost of a thing," says he, "is *the amount of what I will call life* which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run." I have been accustomed to put it to myself, perhaps more clearly,

Digitized by Google

that the price we have to pay for money is paid in liberty. Between these two ways of it, at least, the reader will probably not fail to find a third definition of his own; and it follows, on one or other, that a man may pay too dearly for his livelihood, by giving, in Thoreau's terms, his whole life for it, or, in mine, bartering for it the whole of his available liberty, and becoming a slave till death. There are two questions to be considered—the quality of what we buy, and the price we have to pay for it. Do you want a thousand a year, a two thousand a year, or a ten thousand a year livelihood? and can you afford the one you want? It is a matter of taste; it is not in the least degree a question of duty, though commonly supposed so. But there is no authority for that view anywhere. It is nowhere in the Bible. It is true that we might do a vast amount of good if we were wealthy, but it is also highly improbable; not many do; and the art of growing rich is not only quite distinct from that of doing good, but the practice of the one does not at all train a man for practising the other. "Money might be of great service to me," writes Thoreau; "but the difficulty now is that I do not improve my opportunities, and therefore I am not prepared to have my opportunities increased." It is a mere illusion that, above a certain income, the personal desires will be satisfied and leave a wider margin for the generous impulse. It is as difficult to be generous, or anything else, except perhaps a member of Parliament, on thirty thousand as on two hundred a year.

Now Thoreau's tastes were well defined. He loved to be free, to be master of his times and seasons, to indulge the mind rather than the body; he preferred long rambles to rich dinners, his own reflections to the consideration of society, and an easy, calm, unfettered, active life among green trees to dull toiling at the counter of a bank. And such being his inclination he determined to gratify it. A poor man must save off something; he determined to save off his livelihood. "When a man has attained those things which are necessary to life," he writes, "there is another alternative than to obtain the superfluities; *he may adventure on life now*, his vacation from humbler toil having commenced." Thoreau would get shelter, some kind of covering for his body, and necessary daily bread; even these he should get as cheaply as possible; and then, his vacation from humbler toil having commenced, devote himself to oriental philosophers, the study of nature, and the work of self-improvement.

Prudence, which bids us all go to the ant for sluggards and hoard against the day of sickness, was not a favourite with Thoreau. He preferred that other, whose name is so much misappropriated: Faith. When he had secured the necessaries of the moment, he would not reckon up possible accidents or torment himself with trouble for the future. He had no toleration for the man "who ventures to live only by the aid of the mutual insurance company, which has promised to bury him decently." He would trust himself a little to the world. "We may safely trust a good deal more than we do," says he. "How much is not done by us! or what if we had been taken sick?" And then, with a stab of satire,

Digitized by Google

he describes contemporary mankind in a phrase: "All the day long on the alert, at night we unwillingly say our prayers and commit ourselves to uncertainties." It is not likely that the public will be much affected by Thoreau, when they blink the direct injunctions of the religion they profess; and yet, whether we will or no, we make the same hazardous ventures; we back our own health and the honesty of our neighbours for all that we are worth; and it is chilling to think how many must lose their wager.

In 1845, twenty-eight years old, an age by which the liveliest have usually declined into some conformity with the world, Thoreau, with a capital of something less than five pounds and a borrowed axe, walked forth into the woods by Walden Pond, and began his new experiment in life. He built himself a dwelling, and returned the axe, he says with characteristic and workmanlike pride, sharper than when he borrowed it; he reclaimed a patch, where he cultivated beans, peas, potatoes, and sweet corn; he had his bread to bake, his farm to dig, and for the matter of six weeks in the summer he worked at surveying, carpentry, or some other of his numerous dexterities, for hire. For more than five years, this was all that he required to do for his support, and he had the winter and most of the summer at his entire disposal. For six weeks of occupation, a little cooking and a little gentle hygienic gardening, the man, you may say, had as good as stolen his livelihood. Or we must rather allow that he had done far better; for the thief himself is continually and busily occupied; and even one born to inherit a million will have more calls upon his time than Thoreau. Well might he say, "What old people tell you you cannot do, you try and find you can." And how surprising is his conclusion: "I am convinced that *to maintain oneself on this earth is not a hardship, but a pastime,* if we will live simply and wisely; *as the pursuits of simpler nations are still the sports of the more artificial.*"

When he had enough of that kind of life, he showed the same simplicity in giving it up as in beginning it. There are some who could have done the one, but, vanity forbidding, not the other; and that is perhaps the story of the hermits; but Thoreau made no fetish of his own example, and did what he wanted squarely. And five years is long enough for an experiment and to prove the success of transcendental Yankeeism. It is not his frugality which is worthy of note; for, to begin with, that was inborn, and therefore inimitable by others who are differently constituted; and again, it was no new thing, but has often been equalled by poor Scotch students at the universities. The point is the sanity of his view of life, and the insight with which he recognised the position of money, and thought out for himself the problem of riches and a livelihood. Apart from his eccentricities, he had perceived, and was acting on, a truth of universal application. For money enters in two different characters into the scheme of life. A certain amount, varying with the number and empire of our desires, is a true necessary to each

Digitized by Google

one of us in the present order of society; but beyond that amount, money is a commodity to be bought or not to be bought, a luxury in which we may either indulge or stint ourselves, like any other. And there are many luxuries that we may legitimately prefer to it, such as a grateful conscience, a country life, or the woman of our inclination. Trite, flat, and obvious as this conclusion may appear, we have only to look round us in society to see how scantily it has been recognised; and perhaps even ourselves, after a little reflection, may decide to spend a trifle less for money, and indulge ourselves a trifle more in the article of freedom.

III.

"To have done anything by which you earned money merely," says Thoreau, "is to be" (have been, he means) "idle and worse." There are two passages in his letters, both, oddly enough, relating to firewood, which must be brought together to be rightly understood. So taken, they contain between them the marrow of all good sense on the subject of work in its relation to something broader than mere livelihood. Here is the first: "I suppose I have burned up a good-sized tree to-night—and for what? I settled with Mr. Tarbell for it the other day; but that wasn't the final settlement. I got off cheaply from him. At last one will say: 'Let us see, how much wood did you burn, sir?' And I shall shudder to think that the next question will be, 'What did you do while you were warm?'" Even after we have settled with Admetus in the person of Mr. Tarbell, there comes, you see, a further question. It is not enough to have earned our livelihood. Either the earning itself should have been serviceable to mankind, or something else must follow. To live is sometimes very difficult, but it is never meritorious in itself; and we must have a reason to allege to our own conscience why we should continue to exist upon this crowded earth. If Thoreau had simply dwelt in his house at Walden, a lover of trees, birds, and fishes, and the open air and virtue, a reader of wise books, an idle, selfish self-improver, he would have managed to cheat Admetus, but, to cling to metaphor, the devil would have had him in the end. Those who can avoid toil altogether and dwell in the Arcadia of private means, and even those who can, by abstinence, reduce the necessary amount of it to some six weeks a year, having the more liberty, have only the higher moral obligation to be up and doing in the interest of man.

The second passage is this: "There is a far more important and warming heat, commonly lost, which precedes the burning of the wood. It is the smoke of industry, which is incense. I had been so thoroughly warmed in body and spirit, that when at length my fuel was housed, I came near selling it to the ashman, as if I had extracted all its heat." Industry is, in itself and when properly chosen, delightful and profitable to the worker; and when your toil has been a pleasure, you have not, as Thoreau says, "earned money merely," but money, health, delight, and

Digitized by Google

moral profit all in one. "We must heap up a great pile of doing for a small diameter of being," he says in another place; and then exclaims, "How admirably the artist is made to accomplish his self-culture by devotion to his art!" We may escape uncongenial toil, only to devote ourselves to that which is congenial. It is only to transact some higher business that even Apollo dare play the truant from Admetus. We must all work for the sake of work; we must all work, as Thoreau says again, in any "absorbing pursuit—it does not much matter what, so it be honest;" but the most profitable work is that which combines into one continued effort the largest proportion of the powers and desires of a man's nature; that into which he will plunge with ardour, and from which he will desist with reluctance; in which he will know the weariness of fatigue, but not that of satiety; and which will be ever fresh, pleasing, and stimulating to his taste. Such work holds a man together, braced at all points; it does not suffer him to doze or wander; it keeps him actively conscious of himself, yet raised among superior interests; it gives him the profit of industry with the pleasures of a pastime. This is what his art should be to the true artist, and that to a degree unknown in other and less intimate pursuits. For other professions stand apart from the human business of life; but an art has its seat at the centre of the artist's doings and sufferings, deals directly with his experiences, teaches him the lessons of his own fortunes and mishaps, and becomes a part of his biography. So says Goethe:

> Spät erklingt was früh erklang;
> Glück und Unglück wird Gesang.

Now Thoreau's art was literature; and it was one of which he had conceived most ambitiously. He loved and believed in good books. He said well, "Life is not habitually seen from any common platform so truly and unexaggerated as in the light of literature." But the literature he loved was of the heroic order. "Books, not which afford us a cowering enjoyment, but in which each thought is of unusual daring; such as an idle man cannot read, and a timid one would not be entertained by; which even make us dangerous to existing institutions—such I call good books." He did not think them easy to be read. "The heroic books," he says, "even if printed in the character of our mother-tongue, will always be in a language dead to degenerate times; and we must laboriously seek the meaning of each word and line, conjecturing a larger sense than common use permits out of what wisdom and valour and generosity we have." Nor does he suppose that such books are easily written. "Great prose, of equal elevation, commands our respect more than great verse," says he, "since it implies a more permanent and level height, a life more pervaded with the grandeur of the thought. The poet often only makes an irruption, like the Parthian, and is off again, shooting while he retreats; but the prose writer has conquered like a Roman and settled colonies." We may ask ourselves, almost with dismay, whether such works exist at all but in the imagination of the

Digitized by Google

student. For the bulk of the best of books is apt to be made up with ballast; and those in which energy of thought is combined with any stateliness of utterance may be almost counted on the fingers. Looking round in English for a book that should answer Thoreau's two demands of a style like poetry and sense that shall be both original and inspiriting, I come to Milton's *Areopagitica*, and can name no other instance for the moment. Two things at least are plain: that if a man will condescend to nothing more commonplace in the way of reading, he must not look to have a large library; and that if he proposes himself to write in a similar vein, he will find his work cut out for him.

Thoreau composed seemingly while he walked, or at least exercise and composition were with him intimately connected; for we are told that "the length of his walk uniformly made the length of his writing." He speaks in one place of "plainness and vigour, the ornaments of style," which is rather too paradoxical to be comprehensively true. In another he remarks: "As for style of writing, if one has anything to say it drops from him simply as a stone falls to the ground." We must conjecture a very large sense indeed for the phrase "if one has anything to say." When truth flows from a man, fittingly clothed in style and without conscious effort, it is because the effort has been made and the work practically completed before he sat down to write. It is only out of fulness of thinking that expression drops perfect like a ripe fruit; and when Thoreau wrote so nonchalantly at his desk, it was because he had been vigorously active during his walk. For neither clearness, compression, nor beauty of language come to any living creature till after a busy and a prolonged acquaintance with the subject on hand. Easy writers are those who, like Walter Scott, choose to remain contented with a less degree of perfection than is legitimately within the compass of their powers. We hear of Shakespeare and his clean manuscript; but in face of the evidence of the style itself and of the various editions of *Hamlet*, this merely proves that Messrs. Hemming and Condell were unacquainted with the common enough phenomenon called a fair copy. He who would recast a tragedy already given to the world must frequently and earnestly have revised details in the study. Thoreau himself, and in spite of his protestations, is an instance of even extreme research in one direction; and his effort after heroic utterance is proved not only by the occasional finish, but by the determined exaggeration of his style. "I trust you realise what an exaggerator I am—that I lay myself out to exaggerate," he writes. And again, hinting at the explanation: "Who that has heard a strain of music feared lest he should speak extravagantly any more for ever?" And yet once more, in his essay on Carlyle, and this time with his meaning well in hand: "No truth, we think, was ever expressed but with this sort of emphasis, that for the time there seemed to be no other." Thus Thoreau was an exaggerative and a parabolical writer, not because he loved the literature of the East, but from a desire that people should understand and realise what he

Digitized by Google

was writing. He was near the truth upon the general question; but in his own particular method, it appears to me, he wandered. Literature is not less a conventional art than painting or sculpture; and it is the least striking, as it is the most comprehensive, of the three. To hear a strain of music, to see a beautiful woman, a river, a great city, or a starry night, is to make a man despair of his Lilliputian arts in language. Now, to gain that emphasis which seems denied to us by the very nature of the medium, the proper method of literature is by selection, which is a kind of negative exaggeration. It is the right of the literary artist, as Thoreau was on the point of seeing, to leave out whatever does not suit his purpose. Thus we extract the pure gold; and thus the well-written story of a noble life becomes, by its very omissions, more thrilling to the reader. But to go beyond this, like Thoreau, and to exaggerate directly, is to leave the saner classical tradition, and to put the reader on his guard. And when you write the whole for the half, you do not express your thought more forcibly, but only express a different thought which is not yours.

Thoreau's true subject was the pursuit of self-improvement combined with an unfriendly criticism of life as it goes on in our societies; it is there that he best displays the freshness and surprising trenchancy of his intellect; it is there that his style becomes plain and vigorous, and therefore, according to his own formula, ornamental. Yet he did not care to follow this vein singly, but must drop into it by the way in books of a different purport. *Walden, or Life in the Woods, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, The Maine Woods*, such are the titles he affects. He was probably reminded by his delicate critical perception that the true business of literature is with narrative; in reasoned narrative, and there alone, that art enjoys all its advantages, and suffers least from its defects. Dry precept and disembodied disquisition, as they can only be read with an effort of abstraction, can never convey a perfectly complete or a perfectly natural impression. Truth, even in literature, must be clothed with flesh and blood, or it cannot tell its whole story to the reader. Hence the effect of anecdote on simple minds; and hence good biographies and works of high, imaginative art, are not only far more entertaining, but far more edifying, than books of theory or precept. Now Thoreau could not clothe his opinions in the garment of art, for that was not his talent; but he sought to gain the same elbow-room for himself, and to afford a similar relief to his readers, by mingling his thoughts with a record of experience.

Again, he was a lover of nature. The quality which we should call mystery in a painting, and which belongs so particularly to the aspect of the external world and to its influence upon our feelings, was one which he was never weary of attempting to reproduce in his books. The seeming significance of nature's appearances, their unchanging strangeness to the senses, and the thrilling response which they waken in the mind of man, continued to surprise and stimulate his spirits. It appeared to him, I think, that if we could only write near enough to

Digitized by Google

the facts, and yet with no pedestrian calm, but ardently, we might transfer the glamour of reality direct upon our pages; and that, if it were once thus captured and expressed, a new and instructive relation might appear between men's thoughts and the phenomena of nature. This was the eagle that he pursued all his life long, like a schoolboy with a butterfly net. Hear him to a friend: "Let me suggest a theme for you—to state to yourself precisely and completely what that walk over the mountains amounted to for you, returning to this essay again and again until you are satisfied that all that was important in your experience is in it. Don't suppose that you can tell it precisely the first dozen times you try, but at 'em again; especially when, after a sufficient pause, you suspect that you are touching the heart or summit of the matter, reiterate your blows there, and account for the mountain to yourself. Not that the story need be long, but it will take a long while to make it short." Such was the method, not consistent for a man whose meanings were to "drop from him as a stone falls to the ground." Perhaps the most successful work that Thoreau ever accomplished in this direction is to be found in the passages relating to fish in the *Week*. These are remarkable for a vivid truth of impression and a happy suitability of language, not frequently surpassed.

Whatever Thoreau tried to do was tried in fair, square prose, with sentences solidly built, and no help from bastard rhythms. Moreover, there is a progression—I cannot call it a progress—in his work towards a more and more strictly prosaic level, until at last he sinks into the bathos of the prosy. Emerson mentions having once remarked to Thoreau: "Who would not like to write something which all can read, like *Robinson Crusoe*? and who does not see with regret that his page is not solid with a right materialistic treatment which delights everybody?" I must say in passing that it is not the right materialistic treatment which delights the world in *Robinson*, but the romantic and philosophic interest of the fable. The same treatment does quite the reverse of delighting us when it is applied, in *Colonel Jack*, to the management of a plantation. But I cannot help suspecting Thoreau to have been influenced either by this identical remark or by some other closely similar in meaning. He began to fall more and more into a detailed materialistic treatment; he went into the business doggedly, as who should make a guide-book; he not only chronicled what had been important in his own experience, but whatever might have been important in the experience of anybody else; not only what had affected him, but all that he saw or heard. His ardour had grown less, or perhaps it was inconsistent with a right materialistic treatment to display such emotions as he felt; and, to complete the eventful change, he chose, from a sense of moral dignity, to gut these later works of the saving quality of humour. He was not one of those authors who have learned, in his own words, "to leave out their dulness." He inflicts his full quantity upon the reader in such books as *Cape Cod*, or *The Yankee in Canada*. Of the latter he confessed that he had not managed to get much of himself

Digitized by Google

into it. God knows he had not, nor yet much of Canada, we may hope. "Nothing," he says somewhere, "can shock a brave man but dulness." Well, there are few spots more shocking to the brave than the pages of *The Yankee in Canada.*

There are but three books of his that will be read with much pleasure: the *Week*, *Walden*, and the collected letters. As to his poetry, Emerson's word shall suffice for us, it is so accurate and so prettily said: "The thyme and marjoram are not yet honey." In this, as in his prose, he relied greatly on the goodwill of the reader, and wrote throughout in faith. It was an exercise of faith to suppose that many would understand the sense of his best work, or that any could be exhilarated by the dreary chronicling of his worst. "But," as he says, "the gods do not hear any rude or discordant sound, as we learn from the echo; and I know that the nature towards which I launch these sounds is so rich that it will modulate anew and wonderfully improve my nudest strain."

IV.

"What means the fact," he cries, "that a soul which has lost all hope for itself can inspire in another listening soul such an infinite confidence in it, even while it is expressing its despair?" The question is an echo and an illustration of the words last quoted; and it forms the keynote of his thoughts on friendship. No one else, to my knowledge, has spoken in so high and just a spirit of the kindly relations; and I doubt if it be a drawback that these lessons should come from one in many ways so unfitted to be a teacher in this branch. The very coldness and egoism of his own intercourse gave him a clearer insight into the intellectual basis of our warm, mutual tolerations; and testimony to their worth comes with added force from one who was solitary and disobliging, and of whom a friend remarked, with equal wit and wisdom, "I love Henry, but I cannot like him."

He can hardly be persuaded to make any distinction between love and friendship; in such rarefied and freezing air, upon the mountain-tops of meditation, had he taught himself to breathe. He was, indeed, too accurate an observer not to have remarked that "there exists already a natural disinterestedness and liberality" between men and women; yet, he thought, "friendship is no respecter of sex." Perhaps there is a sense in which the words are true; but they were spoken in ignorance; and perhaps we shall have put the matter most correctly, if we call love a foundation for a nearer and freer degree of friendship than can be possible without it. For there are delicacies, eternal between persons of the same sex, which are melted and disappear in the warmth of love.

To both, if they are to be right, he attributes the same nature and condition. "We are not what we are," says he, "nor do we treat or esteem each other for such, but for what we are capable of being." "A friend is one who incessantly pays us the compliment of expecting all the

Digitized by Google

virtues from us, and who can appreciate them in us." "The friend asks no return but that his friend will religiously accept and wear and not disgrace his apotheosis of him." "It is the merit and preservation of friendship that it takes place on a level higher than the actual characters of the parties would seem to warrant." This is to put friendship on a pedestal indeed; and yet the root of the matter is there; and the last sentence, in particular, is like a light in a dark place, and makes many mysteries plain. We are different with different friends; yet if we look closely we shall find that every such relation reposes on some particular apotheosis of oneself; with each friend, although we could not distinguish it in words from any other, we have at least one special reputation to preserve: and it is thus that we run, when mortified, to our friend or the woman that we love, not to hear ourselves called better, but to be better men in point of fact. We seek this society to flatter ourselves with our own good conduct. And hence any falsehood in the relation, any incomplete or perverted understanding, will spoil even the pleasure of these visits. Thus says Thoreau again: "Only lovers know the value of truth." And yet again: "They ask for words and deeds when a true relation is word and deed."

But it follows that since they are neither of them so good as the other hopes, and each is, in a very honest manner, playing a part above his powers, such an intercourse must often be disappointing to both. "We may bid farewell sooner than complain," says Thoreau, "for our complaint is too well grounded to be uttered." "We have not so good a right to hate any as our friend."

> "It were treason to our love
> And a sin to God above,
> One iota to abate
> Of a pure, impartial hate."

Love is not blind, nor yet forgiving. "O yes, believe me," as the song says, "Love has eyes!" The nearer the intimacy, the more cuttingly do we feel the unworthiness of those we love; and because you love one, and would die for that love to-morrow, you have not forgiven, and you never will forgive, that friend's misconduct. If you want a person's faults, go to those who love him. They will not tell you, but they know. And herein lies the magnanimous courage of love, that it endures this knowledge without change.

It required a cold, distant personality like that of Thoreau, perhaps to recognise and certainly to utter this truth; for a more human love makes it a point of honour not to acknowledge those faults of which it is most conscious. But his point of view is both high and dry. He has no illusions; he does not give way to love any more than to hatred; but preserves them both with care like valuable curiosities. A more bald-headed picture of life, if I may so express myself, or a more selfish, has seldom been presented. He is an egoist; he does not remember, or does not think it worth while to remark, that, in these near intimacies,

Digitized by Google

we are ninety-nine times disappointed in our beggarly selves for once that we are disappointed in our friend; that it is we who seem most frequently undeserving of the love that unites us; and that it is by our friend's conduct that we are continually rebuked and yet strengthened for a fresh endeavour. Thoreau is dry, priggish, and selfish. It is profit he is after in these intimacies; moral profit, certainly, but still profit to himself. If you will be the sort of friend I want, he remarks naïvely, "my education cannot dispense with your society." His education! as though a friend were a dictionary. And with all this, not one word about pleasure, or laughter, or kisses, or any quality of flesh and blood. It was not inappropriate, surely, that he had such close relations with the fish. We can understand the friend already quoted, when he cried: "As for taking his arm, I would as soon think of taking the arm of an elm-tree!"

As a matter of fact he experienced but a broken enjoyment in his intimacies. He says he has been perpetually on the brink of the sort of intercourse he wanted, and yet never completely attained it. And what else had he to expect when he would not, in a happy phrase of Carlyle's, "nestle down into it"? Truly, so it will be always if you only stroll in upon your friends as you might stroll in to see a cricket match; and even then not simply for the pleasure of the thing, but with some afterthought of self-improvement, as though you had come to the cricket match to bet. It was his theory that people saw each other too frequently, so that their curiosity was not properly whetted, nor had they anything fresh to communicate; but friendship must be something else than a society for mutual improvement—indeed, it must only be that by the way, and to some extent unconsciously; and if Thoreau had been a man instead of a manner of elm-tree, he would have felt that he saw his friends too seldom, and have reaped benefits unknown to his philosophy from a more sustained and easy intercourse. We might remind him of his own words about love: "We should have no reserve; we should give the whole of ourselves to that business. But commonly men have not imagination enough to be thus employed about a human being, but must be coopering a barrel, forsooth." Ay, or reading oriental philosophers. It is not the nature of the rival occupation, it is the fact that you suffer it to be a rival, that renders loving intimacy impossible. Nothing is given for nothing in this world; there can be no true love, even on your own side, without devotion; devotion is the exercise of love, by which it grows; but if you will give enough of that, if you will pay the price in a sufficient "amount of what you call life," why then indeed, whether with wife or comrade, you may have months and even years of such easy, natural, pleasurable, and yet improving intercourse as shall make time a moment and kindness a delight.

The secret of his retirement lies not in misanthropy, of which he had no tincture, but part in his engrossing design of self-improvement and part in the real deficiencies of social intercourse. He was not so much difficult about his fellow human beings as he could not tolerate the terms

Digitized by Google

of their association. He could take to a man for any genuine qualities, as we see by his admirable sketch of the Canadian woodcutter in *Walden*; but he would not consent, in his own words, to "feebly fabulate and paddle in the social slush." It seemed to him, I think, that society is precisely the reverse of friendship, in that it takes place on a lower level than the characters of any of the parties would warrant us to expect. The society talk of even the most brilliant man is of greatly less account than what you will get from him in (as the French say) a little committee. And Thoreau wanted geniality; he had not enough of the superficial, even at command; he could not swoop into a parlour and, in the naval phrase, "cut out" a human being from that dreary port; nor had he inclination for the task. I suspect he loved books and nature as well and near as warmly as he loved his fellow-creatures: a melancholy, lean degeneration of the human character.

"As for the dispute about solitude and society," he thus sums up, "any comparison is impertinent. It is an idling down on the plain at the base of the mountain instead of climbing steadily to its top. Of course you will be glad of all the society you can get to go up with? Will you go to glory with me? is the burden of the song. It is not that we love to be alone, but that we love to soar, and when we do soar the company grows thinner and thinner till there is none at all. It is either the tribune on the plain, a sermon on the mount, or a very private ecstasy still higher up. Use all the society that will abet you." But surely it is no very extravagant opinion that it is better to give than to receive, to serve than to use our companions; and above all, where there is no question of service upon either side, that it is good to enjoy their company like a natural man. It is curious and in some ways dispiriting that a writer may be always best corrected out of his own mouth; and so, to conclude, here is another passage from Thoreau which seems aimed directly at himself: "Do not be too moral; you may cheat yourself out of much life so. . . . *All fables, indeed, have their morals; but the innocent enjoy the story.*"

V.

"The only obligation," says he, "which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right." "Why should we ever go abroad, even across the way, to ask a neighbour's advice?" "There is a nearer neighbour within, who is incessantly telling us how we should behave. *But we wait for the neighbour without to tell us of some false, easier way.*" "The greater part of what my neighbours call good I believe in my soul to be bad." To be what we are, and to become what we are capable of becoming, is the only end of life. It is "when we fall behind ourselves" that "we are cursed with duties and the neglect of duties." "I love the wild," he says, "not less than the good." And again: "The life of a good man will hardly improve us more than the life of a freebooter, for the inevitable laws appear as plainly in the in-

Digitized by Google

fringement as in the observance, and" (mark this) "*our lives are sustained by a nearly equal expense of virtue of some kind.*" Even although he were a prig, it will be owned he could announce a startling doctrine. "As for doing good," he writes elsewhere, "that is one of the professions that are full. Moreover, I have tried it fairly, and, strange as it may seem, am satisfied that it does not agree with my constitution. Probably I should not conscientiously and deliberately forsake my particular calling to do the good which society demands of me, to save the universe from annihilation; and I believe that a like but infinitely greater steadfastness elsewhere is all that now preserves it. If you should ever be betrayed into any of these philanthropies, do not let your left hand know what your right hand does, for it is not worth knowing." Elsewhere he returns upon the subject, and explains his meaning thus: "If I ever *did* a man any good in their sense, of course it was something exceptional and insignificant compared with the good or evil I am constantly doing by being what I am."

There is a rude nobility, like that of a barbarian king, in this unshaken confidence in himself and indifference to the wants, thoughts, or sufferings of others. In the whole man I find no trace of pity. This was partly the result of theory, for he held the world too mysterious to be criticised, and asks conclusively: "What right have I to grieve who have not ceased to wonder?" But it sprang still more from constitutional indifference and superiority; and he grew up healthy, composed, and unconscious from among life's horrors, like a green bay tree from a field of battle. It was from this lack in himself that he failed to do justice to the spirit of Christ; for while he could glean more meaning from individual precepts than any score of Christians, yet he conceived life in such a different hope, and viewed it with such contrary emotions, that the sense and purport of the doctrine as a whole seems to have passed him by or left him unimpressed. He could understand the idealism of the Christian view, but he was himself so unaffectedly unhuman that he did not recognise the human intention and essence of that teaching. Hence he complained that Christ did not leave us a rule that was proper and sufficient for this world, not having conceived the nature of the rule that was laid down; for things of that character that are sufficiently unacceptable become positively non-existent to the mind. But perhaps we shall best appreciate the defect in Thoreau by seeing it supplied in the case of Whitman. For the one, I feel confident, is the disciple of the other; it is what Thoreau clearly whispered that Whitman so uproariously bawls; it is the same doctrine, but with how immense a difference! the same argument, but used to what a new conclusion! Thoreau had plenty of humour until he tutored himself out of it, and so forfeited that best birthright of a sensible man; Whitman, in that respect, seems to have been sent into the world naked and unashamed; and yet by a strange consummation, it is the theory of the former that is arid, abstract, and claustral. Of these two philosophies so nearly identical at bottom, the

Digitized by Google

one pursues self-improvement—a churlish, mangy dog; the other is up with the morning, in the best of health, and following the nymph Happiness, buxom, blithe, and debonair. Happiness, at least, is not solitary; it joys to communicate; it loves others, for it depends on them for its existence; it sanctions and encourages to all delights that are not unkind in themselves; if it lived to a thousand, it would not make excision of a single humorous passage; and while the self-improver dwindles towards the prig, and, if he be not of an excellent constitution, may even grow deformed into an Obermann, the very name and appearance of a happy man breathe of good-nature, and help the rest of us to live.

In the case of Thoreau, so great a show of doctrine demands some outcome in the field of action. If nothing were to be done but build a shanty beside Walden Pond, we have heard altogether too much of these declarations of independence. That the man wrote some books is nothing to the purpose, for the same has been done in a suburban villa. That he kept himself happy is perhaps a sufficient excuse, but it is disappointing to the reader. We may be unjust, but when a man despises commerce and philanthropy alike, and has views of good so soaring that he must take himself apart from mankind for their cultivation, we will not be content without some striking act. It was not Thoreau's fault if he were not martyred; had the occasion come, he would have made a noble ending. As it is, he did once seek to interfere in the world's course; he made one practical appearance on the stage of affairs; and a strange one it was, and strangely characteristic of the nobility and the eccentricity of the man. It was forced on him by his calm but radical opposition to negro slavery. "Voting for the right is doing nothing for it," he saw; "it is only expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail." For his part, he would not "for an instant recognise that political organisation for *his* government which is the *slave's* government also." "I do not hesitate to say," he adds, "that those who call themselves Abolitionists should at once effectually withdraw their support, both in person and property, from the government of Massachusetts." That is what he did: in 1843 he ceased to pay the poll-tax. The highway-tax he paid, for he said he was as desirous to be a good neighbour as to be a bad subject; but no more poll-tax to the State of Massachusetts. Thoreau had now seceded, and was a polity unto himself; or, as he explains it with admirable sense: "In fact, I quietly declare war with the State after my fashion, though I will still make what use and get what advantage of her I can, as is usual in such cases." He was put in prison; but that was a part of his design. "Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison. I know this well, that if one thousand, if one hundred, if ten men whom I could name—ay, if *one* HONEST man, in this State of Massachusetts, *ceasing to hold slaves* were actually to withdraw from this copartnership, and be locked up in the county gaol

Digitized by Google

therefor, it would be the abolition of slavery in America. For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be: what is once well done is done for ever." Such was his theory of civil disobedience.

And the upshot? A friend paid the tax for him; continued year by year to pay it in the sequel; and Thoreau was free to walk the woods unmolested. It was a *fiasco*, but to me it does not seem laughable; even those who joined in the laughter at the moment would be insensibly affected by this quaint instance of a good man's horror for injustice. We may compute the worth of that one night's imprisonment as outweighing half a hundred voters at some subsequent election; and if Thoreau had possessed as great a power of persuasion as (let us say) Falstaff, if he had counted a party however small, if his example had been followed by a hundred or by thirty of his fellows, I cannot but believe it would have greatly precipitated the era of freedom and justice. We feel the misdeeds of our country with so little fervour, for we are not witnesses to the suffering they cause; but when we see them wake an active horror in our fellow-man, when we see a neighbour prefer to lie in prison rather than be so much as passively implicated in their perpetration, even the dullest of us will begin to realise them with a quicker pulse.

Not far from twenty years later, when Captain John Brown was taken at Harper's Ferry, Thoreau was the first to come forward in his defence. The committees wrote to him unanimously that his action was premature. "I did not send to you for advice," said he, "but to announce that I was to speak." I have used the word "defence;" in truth he did not seek to defend him, even declared it would be better for the good cause that he should die; but he praised his action as I think Brown would have liked to hear it praised.

Thus this singularly eccentric and independent mind, wedded to a character of so much strength, singleness, and purity, pursued its own path of self-improvement for more than half a century, part gymnosophist, part backwoodsman; and thus did it come twice, though in a subaltern attitude, into the field of political history.

R. L. S.

NOTE.—Since this study was in type, I have learned that Thoreau's diaries remain complete in manuscript. They cannot fail to be of interest to all who love nature, literature, or virtue. But there seems a conspiracy to keep that from us which we most desire. When so many books are lost beyond recall, there is no excuse for the apathy which leaves us without the diaries of Thoreau, and with no more luxury of a complete *Arabian Nights* than Mr. M'Naughten's appetising volume.

Digitized by Google

Cottagers and Cottages.

We own ourselves indebted to the English cottager for some of the sweetest poetry of the feelings and imagination. His unobtrusive virtues and the blessings of his lowly lot have been the theme of eloquent raptures tempered by generous envy. The rustic ennobled by honest labour, and married to the melodious numbers of immortal verse, has been made the father of a flourishing family of impressive moral lessons. We are all familiar with the virtuous peasant maiden busied over the cottage cares that lend new graces to her personal attractions. We have seen her on the canvases of the painters as in the idylls of the poets, bending maternally over her tiny brothers and sisters; or swaying gracefully between the brimming water-pails she fetches from the fountain up the flowery lane; or singing tunefully over the baking-board with her swelling white arms bared to the elbow. Nor is the future mother of a blooming family insensible to the tender passion. We know her in other lyrics besides "The Cotter's Saturday Night," lending a listening ear to an impassioned lover; or we steal upon her in her moments of careless *abandon*, laving her fairy feet, like Dorothea in *Don Quixote*, in the limpid brook, under the verdant arch of foliage that throws its shadows on her sun-warmed cheek. Nor is the maiden's own mother, though touched by time, made much less attractive in her ripe maturity. And the matron in the midst of her domestic preoccupations shows the thoughtful tenderness that is the commonest of qualities among the poor for the beings that are always prominent in these rural pictures. There is the venerable grandfather or grandmother with the snowy locks and the bowed form, whose arm-chair is arranged in winter in the glowing chimney nook, or set out in the fresh air and summer sunshine, by the same affectionate hands that are smoothing a gentle descent to the village churchyard. Then there is the cottage, modestly adorned within and without, as if it had been got up for exhibition at an *Exposition Universelle*. Song-writers and painters seldom care to stoop to the vulgar details of sleeping accommodation and drainage and a decent water supply. But, on the other hand, they devote their æsthetical attention to all that harmonises with the ideal fitness of things. That the supply of spring water is ample may be assumed from the scrupulous purity of everything between the floor and the ceiling, including the comfortably clad persons of the inmates. The plain wooden furniture glistens with the indefatigable application of "elbow-grease;" and pewter plates are resplendent on the racks that surmount the display of gorgeous crockery. That the

Digitized by Google

head of the little household is in regular, though by no means excessive, work may be assumed from the time he can devote to his garden. The bloom of his flower borders lights up his vegetable beds; and as for his little dwelling, it is half lost to the sight under the fragrant masses of twining creepers. These are pretty pictures, moral and material; nor do we say that there are not the elements of truth in them. So far as external appearances go, as we may take occasion to show, there are many low-roofed cottages in the breadth and length of the islands that might well be the embodiment of the poets' fancies. And as for the virtues and graces of humble life, we are certainly not inclined to deny them, having, indeed, been equally astonished and delighted to meet them in their finer forms in the most unlikely places. Yet we fear, as matter of fact, that *mutatis mutandis*, humanity is very much the same in all ranks. Temptations as drags upon its nobler aspirations, in the shapes of poverty, ignorance, and over-anxiety for the morrow, scarcely tend to tone down its harsher features, and peasant life, regarded from within rather than without, is decidedly more prosaical than poetical.

But the prospects of the rural labourers would appear to be brightening. Their wages have been steadily going up, even in Dorsetshire and the south-western counties. Philanthropists have been turning their attention in their direction; well-to-do landowners have been improving their cottages; farmers begin to find it their interest to follow suit, if they hope to have hands to till their farms, for emigration and the demands of the mining districts and manufacturing towns have been thinning the redundant rural population. Then the gentlemen of the School Boards have come to the front, and have forced the children of parents who could seldom read to eat of the fruits of the tree of knowledge. It is easy to foresee that in any remodelling of our agricultural system the field hands must meet with increased consideration. A generation and a half, or a couple of generations ago, they were almost absolutely at the mercy of their employers, and apparently quite resigned to remain so. If they did not wear the iron collar of the serf, like "Gurth, the born thrall of Cedric of Rotherwood;" if they were not *adscripti* by statute to the soil and its minerals, like those Scotch salters and colliers who could be summarily reclaimed if they ran from their work, like the slaves of the Southern owners who were carried north by the "underground railway"—still, practically it came very much to the same thing. The saplings shot up under the shade of the parent trees, rooted to the land like the hedgerow timber. Their ideas were bounded by the horizon of their parish, and all beyond that was an unknown world to them. They went to the nearest wake or fair, when they were strong enough to take service; the waggoner drove his waggon to the neighbouring market town, and stood gaping in speechless admiration before the show in the shop windows; but for the most part the extreme of their intellectual excitement was the evening talk in the village public-house, or the gossip in the churchyard after service on Sunday. Occasionally some scapegrace youth was caught

Digitized by Google

by the blandishments of a smart recruiting-sergeant; or a lad in a coast parish was kidnapped by a pressgang, and sent involuntarily to sea to serve his Majesty—and that was all. Either his family had looked their last on the absentee, or he came back penniless to his native village, possibly minus a leg or an arm; and in either case his experiences were far from encouraging. The villagers were resigned to their lot, because it never occurred to them that they could better it.

And so far as the body was concerned, unmarried labourers at all events were by no means badly off. If they worked hard early and late, they were warmly housed and well fed. For the most part they lived under their employer's roof, assembled for their meals in his comfortable kitchen, and drew their stools of an evening round the kitchen fire to gossip over the incidents of the day and the working arrangements for the morrow. The money wage was small, though sufficient to provide them with good clothing and a trifle of pocket-money over; but they were freely indulged with the "run of their teeth," and need never stint their magnificent appetites. The bachelor labourer had little to complain of when he was content to live at rack and manger like the horses he tended. But it is not good for man to live alone, even with licence of flirtation; and the day came when he was bent upon matrimony. In a spasm of irrepressible sentiment, clutching at the stalwart waist of the young woman who had been exciting him with the bluff coyness which probably took the shape of sledge-hammer buffets, he came to the point with a blunt ultimatum, and challenged her to say "yes" and name the day. Shortly after that, all was changed for him. From the advent of the first-born baby, that stops his wife from earning wages, he feels the cares and pinching of a growing family. It goes on multiplying beyond reasonable measure, as his buxom helpmate proves unfortunately fruitful. Years must elapse before they come near turning the corner, when the children shall begin to do something towards helping themselves. Meanwhile, though the father may have been still fed at his master's expense, existence is a hard struggle for the rest of them. When the little ones get out of the stuffy atmosphere of the paternal cottage, they may breathe the best and most bracing of air, but, though it nerves the sinews and expands the lungs, it may be a somewhat questionable blessing. The ruddy-faced children roll on the sward, and run races along the lanes, and go in for spoiling their clothes in the mud of the horse-pond, and come home with sharp-set appetites, which are seldom altogether satisfied, even when the cottage household is decently well-to-do. So it is that the children of the rural poor, with all their advantages of fresh air and exercise, are usually somewhat stunted and undersized. We may add that if we may trust our early reminiscences, they fall somewhat short in pluck as in strength; and if the ordeal by battle followed on a difference of opinion, we should put our money on the sons of the Hall or the Rectory. But the stamina is sound enough, only needing feeding up and a little forcing; and they

Digitized by Google

come with a rush afterwards, under favourable conditions. The strongly-knit bones expand, and are covered with solid flesh. In the absence of anything like sustained brain effort, the sturdy frame inclines to corpulence, which is only kept down by the severe field labour; and in the well-grown rustic you have the stuff for the dogged soldiery which opposed a rampart of elastic resistance to the *élan* of Napoleon's legions, and might have formed the "thin red line" at Balaklava, which, as it happened, was nominally composed of Highlanders.

Apropos to Highlanders and Scotland, the Scotch rustics who recruited the regiments for the Peninsular campaigns were intellectually of a decidedly superior class to their English brethren, and so it is that relatively they may be said to have been standing still while the others have been pushed forwards. The parish schoolmaster has for long been a power in Scotland, and a fair, serviceable education has been regarded as the birthright of all ranks. It needed no Act of Parliament, enforced by official inspectors, to make the ordinary Scotch cottier send his children to the school. In saying so, we speak chiefly of the Lowlands; for, of course, in the Highland districts the case was otherwise. With the warmest appreciation of learning, and the best intentions, one cannot send the bairns twice a day over long miles of moss or mountain, through mist and rain. But even in the Highlands, in the course of years, schools and teachers have been rapidly increasing; while the densely-peopled straths have been thinned by emigration, or turned into sheepwalks and lonely deer-forests. As for the low-country cottier, he has always acknowledged the force of inevitable local opinion, and felt himself bound to transmit to his children at least the measure of book-learning he inherited himself. Many a horny-handed rustic, who works in the woods or the ditches all day, looks forward to a pleasant evening with his small collection of books, or the volume that, "aiblins" (mayhap), he has borrowed from the minister. He may be overcome by drowsiness after his work in the open air; but it is a pleasure to read and nod and waken up again, and pass his eye deliberately over the familiar page. Though he may be caught napping in these circumstances, he has often given his serious attention to the subjects, absorbing ideas into his mind with a slow, but vigorous, power of suction; in fact, the expression of his hard, high-featured face, and the light of earnest intelligence in his clear grey eyes, remind you of the colley at the neighbouring farm. Honest Saunders is scarcely so handsome as the silky-haired dog; but he is quite as much given to profitable reflection. In the intervals of his violent exertion with spade or pickaxe, no doubt his mind is revolving many things that chance to come within the circles of his knowledge or philosophy. It is sure that if you drop into talk with him as he goes plodding home from his work, you will be astonished at the earnestness of his somewhat narrow views, and at the "bite" of his vice-like mind upon certain favourite subjects. Very probably there may be a vein of latent poetry in Saunders, though he is slow to betray poetical sensibility; but we

Digitized by Google

have seen such a man surprised into an ejaculation at some striking bit of scenery or startling weather effect, while the gleam from the skies seemed reflected in his face with a vividness that was as much of a revelation as a surprise to you. Matter-of-fact as most of them are, and although their religion is tinctured with the stern austerity of Calvinism, it is somewhat remarkable that the Scottish peasantry have produced an extraordinary number of genuine poets. Rural England can boast her Clare, for Bloomfield, we believe, was the son of a tailor; but Scotland heads a list of peasant bards—and many of them have deserved far more than the local reputation they have earned—with a Burns, a Hogg, and an Allan Cunningham. There may have been something in the influence and inspiration of the scenery. Burns was born in a "box-bed" in a gardener's cottage, on "the banks and braes of bonny Doune;" and the shepherd author of *The Queen's Wake* nursed his fancies as he lay neglecting his charge among the flowering broom that clothes the classic reaches of Yarrow and the knowes above Ettrick. But then, what can be more inspiring for ballad or idyll than the rich, home-like charms of an English landscape under a climate that has the caprices of a beautiful coquette?

We have no desire to draw an ideal Scottish peasant, by way of forcing and pointing a contrast. We have been speaking rather of the "douce" married man, the bone and sinew of a somewhat antiquated school, who perpetuates the grave traditions of the Covenanting times and aspires to the honourable office of elder in his parish. It is a different thing when we shift the scene among the unmarried labourers, and draw back the curtain from the sleeping-rooms arranged under the "bothie" system. Stronger inducements to vice it is difficult to conceive than those that are of the very essence of that vicious system. You have some half dozen or dozen of robust louts quartered together in confined accommodation, without any sort of supervision or any refining element. When the work of the day is over, the evening is to be killed somehow. The farms are widely scattered, with a great breadth of cultivated acreage about each; there is no village green within a short stroll, where games of cricket or football are going forward; there is nothing to be done but dozing over the fire in the bothie, where the talk is sure to be the reverse of edifying. There is little regular dissipation in the way of drinking. Not that the ploughmen are not ready enough to get drunk when they are sent with cattle to the fairs, or attend the "feeing markets" on their own account; but as there is no village or village green, so there seldom is any change-house convenient—and a man must have a passion for ardent spirits who will "travel" half a dozen miles, after his labour, for a gill of whisky. And Scotch prudence is opposed to bringing home a store of spirits in the bottle. A Scotchman succumbs to temptation like other men; but he is slow to start to meet it half way. On the other hand, if the bothie men only worship Bacchus at intervals, they are more assiduous in the less costly devotions

Digitized by Google

to the Cytherean goddess. "Ilka lad maun hae his lass" is in the refrain of one of the most popular north-country songs. There is one young lady whose special charge is attending to the housekeeping of the bachelor barracks. We believe the men are supposed to do their own bed-making; but it is she who presides over the simple cookery of the oatmeal in its various monotonous preparations. She may be supposed to share her good graces impartially, though we fear she seldom finds safety in the multitude of her admirers. Although the bloom of virgin modesty must soon disappear in the rough horseplay that prevails in the farm kitchen and the coarse ribaldry and jokes that echo from the smoky rafters, perhaps she has attached one of the circle to her in particular. His amorous companions lounge further afield; get up a copse and hedgerow flirtation with the daughter of some neighbouring cottager prolonging it far into the gloaming in the fine season, or following it up in some outhouse, or in the lee of a rick, through the bitter evenings of the spring or winter. The almost universal immorality is disgraceful, as the parochial statistics show, especially in some of the north-eastern and south-western counties. Yet it is but fair to admit that post-nuptial infidelities are almost unheard of, although those illicit connections taint the purity of the atmosphere in peasant families, so that, in the words of the great Scotch Reformer, marriage is generally "hasted by shame."

Even when the Scottish cottager has married and taken up housekeeping for himself, he is surrounded by few of those graces of existence which make the lot of his English brethren seem so enviable to the enthusiastic admirers of the poetry of poverty. As a rule, the better off he is, the less picturesque is his habitation. In the scarcity of small villages or hamlets, rows of solid, formal, two-storied dwellings are built on the great farms in the richer agricultural districts. The soil being highly rented, and farmed on the most remunerative principles, the chances are that the cottager is grudged a garden; while ornamental timber gives cover to the sparrows, and throws its roots out to steal the nourishment from the corn-fields. The occupants must content themselves with excellent wages, an abundance of oatmeal, and an allowance of skimmed milk, or possibly grass for a cow. But even in Scotland, there are cottages and cottages, and some of them are singularly attractive with a beauty of their own, for all things in nature must be judged by comparison. You have been crossing a bleak expanse of barren moors and ill-reclaimed corn-land, fenced in with rugged dykes of loose stones. Nothing in the way of timber has gladdened the eye, save here and there a strip of stunted firs, cut down and contorted by the cold, bent on one side by the prevailing breeze, and showing on the long, low ridges that they top like the stubbly black bristles on the back of a wild boar. Suddenly your road declines towards a valley, and you may hear the murmur of a stream brawling along in the bottom. A turn brings you in sight of the parish church, a square, ungainly, but substantial struc-

Digitized by Google

ture that seems built for eternity rather than time. Yet, strange to say, half of its deformity is hidden under an unaccustomed growth of clinging ivy. You are conscious at once of a softness in the air that appears to have encouraged the traces of cultivation. There are groups of hardy ashes grown to a great size, and sheltering colonies of cawing rooks in their grey foliage. And through the tree trunks, over the beds of yellow daffodils in the spring, you discern the walls and chimneys of a little hamlet. Locking the carriage wheels and putting on the drag, you descend by rapid curves into the pleasant oasis. Everything shows the fostering care of some liberal laird or kindly clergyman. The manse, covered with trellised pear-trees and Banksia roses, stands back among the trim hedges of its garden, and the cottages that are clustered around in their degree imitate its neatness. The chill of the whitewashed walls is toned down here and there by a creeper. The thatch of the "rigging" is carefully kept, yet not so perfectly but that tribes of sparrows have made their homes there, and the hamlet is alive with their cheerful twittering. Not that more brilliant songsters are wanting. The blackbird and speckled thrush have built their nests in the great bourtree hedges, or in the willows and alders overhanging the pools of the stream that is enlivened by the skimming flight of the water ousel. There is a choir of linnets in the flowering furze on the banks, and larks are rising and soaring from the little wood-locked meadow haughs.

It is the very place to rear a village poet, should any of the cottagers chance to have a turn in that direction. Nor need he find anything to disenchant his muse in the snug cottage interiors. The kitchen is really scrupulously clean, though the chimney and its surroundings be blackened by the peat smoke. The great pot that holds a simple but savoury mess of meal or potatoes is swinging to the crook over the glowing turf. There are a table with a chair or two, and a great settle against the wall, serving at once for a seat and a meal chest. Cups and plates of brilliant pattern are ranged above, with spoons of pewter or carefully-polished horn, and in a nook to the "north-west" of the "chimney brace"—the Scotch peasant is in the way of determining the locality of the objects nearest to him by the points of the compass—is his much valued library. It consists of the big Bible, of course—chiefly besides of some half-dozen volumes of well-thumbed divinity by eminent lights of the Church who have been hallowed by time and tradition.

These cottages have their little gardens—kale-yards as they used to be called—though the kale that made the national brose when stirred up with oatmeal is gradually being elbowed aside by other vegetables. And attention is being paid to flowers, which is likewise a recent innovation. Besides the climbing plants that cover the whitewash, and the border of rue and mint and southernwood—strong-smelling and savoury herbs which used not only to furnish seasoning for cookery, but those fragrant nosegays which kept the old ladies awake through the long-winded, droning discourse of a minister who was mighty in doctrine—there is a

Digitized by Google

pretty show of stocks and wallflowers backed up by hollyhocks and dahlias. Talking of those old-fashioned herbs, by the way, you may see another relic of the olden time in the shreds of weather-stained scarlet hung up to scare the birds. They have been torn from one of the venerable red cloaks, or roquelaures, which with their ample draperies and hanging hoods used to be the invariable Sunday wear of all the old peasant women in the parish. Brought out weekly from the "muckle kist" in which they had been laid aside in lavender for the intervening six days, with the broadcloth Sabbath suit of the "gudeman," they filled the unventilated parish church with a mingled fragrance of the market-stall and second-hand clothes' shop—an odour which always associated itself, in later life, with the doctrinal eloquence of the Presbyterian theology. But a most picturesque feature in the landscape were those brilliant patches of colour, as they lit up the sombre-clothed groups of church-goers plodding along the dusty road or plunging through the dazzling snow.

The association of snow with cottages suggests a winter scene in the Highlands. We may suppose you have been surprised by a premature storm in a remote shooting-box. In spite of all reasonable precautions, in your precipitate flight to the southward you are experiencing some of the troubles of a Moscow retreat. The horses that painfully dragged the "machine" have been brought to a standstill in a deep snow-drift. The next inn is at least a dozen of miles away; the nearest dwelling of a prosperous sheep-farmer at more than half that distance. But the shades of evening begin to settle down, the leaden-coloured clouds are lowering overhead, and you must trudge forward in search of some shelter. At a turn of the mountain road, a puff of the fitful wind brings a breath of peat-reek to your nostrils; and on closer observation you distinguish the wreath of cerulean smoke curling up against the dead white background. With the snowdrift in your face, had it not been for the sense of smell you might have passed the sheiling of the shepherd without remarking it. It seems hollowed out of the precipitous swell of the moorland behind. The roof has disappeared under the snowy mantle that is enveloping all nature in its thickening folds. The snow that lies heaped against the threshold has confounded the low turf walls and the hill-side in a common colouring, and the sole sign of life is the flicker of light that glimmers through the dusk from the little window. The knock at the door takes the family by surprise, but the sight of a stranger supersedes explanations. The short-petticoated maiden who opens gives place to the stalwart figure of the father, in his suit of almost weather-proof homespun. When a few words have put him *au fait* of the situation, his only thought is how to do the honours of his hut. That your visit "is too much honour for the like of him" is the idea he endeavours to convey to you by his actions, though, with instinctive courtesy, he hardly puts it in words. He may be a Lowland shepherd imported from the borders, or a native-born Celt, but in either case he is equally *empressé*. He

Digitized by Google

assists you in shaking yourself free from your wrappings, and heaps fresh fuel on the fire as he draws the cushioned arm-chair up to the chimney. Though used himself to brave all kinds of weather, he opines that it would be madness to stir a foot further, and busies himself about making you comfortable for the night. The goodwife bustles round you in a flutter, on hospitable thoughts intent. While you are yet in the middle of your apologies, you hear a suppressed scream and chuckle promptly cut short, coming from somewhere at the "but" end of the tenement. It is the dying speech of a literally home-fed pullet, whose death-warrant went promptly forth on your apparition, and who has been rudely dragged from her perch on the rafters. Transferred while yet "in the death thraws" to the gridiron, that "brandered" chicken is by no means bad; the oaten cakes are still better in their way, nor is the goats'-milk cheese to be despised, if your digestion is in sound working order. If it be not, the caulkers from the bottle of Glenlivat will act as an agreeable and useful stimulant. The "braxy," which is brought out in a lordly dish as the *plat* of the evening, must be avoided at any price, though by some exercise of tact. Braxy is the flesh of sheep which have died a natural death, by flood, drift, or disease, and which fall a perquisite to the shepherd. When you have passed your cigar-case or tobacco-pouch to your entertainer, and drawn in with him towards the fire for the "crack" after supper, you are equally pleased by his manners and information. You are in a hovel rather than a cottage. There is a roof of thatch covering rough pine saplings. The walls are built of strata of turf, thickly coated with glossy vegetable carbon. The floor is of beaten earth, and, in places, scarcely so dry as might be desired. Yet the master has his opinions on current politics, on which he is evidently anxious to draw you out, and when you get him on sheep-farming or mountain natural history, he is full of fact and curious anecdote. You gather in the confidence of the friendly talk that he is a sportsman, and if he were to be persuaded to make a clean breast of it, he would confess to a quiet shot now and then at the deer who come marauding on his ill-protected barley-patch. For that, although technically poaching, there is all manner of excuse; and you may assume that otherwise his morals are unimpeachable. You will have an ordeal to go through should he force you into the bed, which, in his uncompromising hospitality, he will insist on giving up to you. The clean sheets are spotless as the driven snow outside, but they are swarming with life when the candle has been extinguished. You rouse yourself in the morning from broken slumbers, less refreshed than you would wish to be; but when you come to take leave of your host, you are face to face with a fresh embarrassment. You are overwhelmed with a sense of his courtesies. He is a poor man, and you have put him to some charges. You have turned his dwelling and his family habits upside down. He has been out and about with the break of day, seeing to the means of extricating your vehicle and speeding the parting guest. Yet, for the life of you,

Digitized by Google

looking in his manly face, you dare hardly offer him any remuneration. The only alternative is to urge him to accept as a *souvenir* something you carry on your person, or to resolve, reluctantly, to remain in his debt till you can discharge it by sending him some welcome present.

If we go south from the Highlands to the English side of the Border, we find that the cottages have still a Scottish character. They are substantial buildings of grey stone, with little in the way of ornamental gardening about them. And their occupants are still of the sinewy and somewhat hard-featured Caledonian stamp; they are still, for the most part, Presbyterians or Dissenters; they still live generally remote from villages; eschew ale and swear by whisky, and are addicted to licentious living before they marry and "range themselves." A very characteristic feature in their life is the Bondager system, which, although it is going out of fashion, still prevails in many districts. Each Northumbrian hind, by the terms of his tenancy and engagement, used to be bound to furnish an able-bodied female labourer for the work of his master's farm. You see these young women in their uniform of linsey-woolsey and calico sunshades, hoeing or weeding by gangs in the great stone-fenced enclosures. They seem to like the life, and perhaps they do; at all events of a sunny day you may look on the cheery side of it, when they are taking their midday meal in the manner of a picnic, with an impulse given to their chatter and merriment by the unusual excitement of the passing stranger.

Among these landward rustics, but not of them, are the fishermen. A North-country fishing village has a picturesqueness of its own, though it scarcely recommends itself to the wandering artist as a place of prolonged sojourn. It stands on a shelving slope between the sand hills and the shingly beech, with the tide ebbing and flowing within a stone's throw of the doors, through a labyrinth of low black reefs almost entirely submerged at low water. The tortuous channels of access are indicated by riveted posts, while poles with pulleys for running up lanterns are erected on eminences on the shore as landmarks. The air is charged with a most ancient and fishlike smell, which is but indifferently sweetened by the crisp sea breeze and the penetrating fragrance from the beds of seaweed. The terrace in front of the single street is one long modern kitchen-midden, covered with the *débris* of decaying fish. Wherever there is a patch of sandy turf behind it is carpeted with nets spread out to dry; and nets are hanging in festoons round all the enclosures. The sheds and storehouses are built of drift-timber; the small outhouses and pigsties of sections of condemned boats. Next to the public house and the tiny Dissenting chapel, the most conspicuous edifice is that devoted to the life-boat. Externally, the place is as filthy as any Indian or Bulgarian village; the atmosphere within the cottages would be positively fœtid, were it not for the involuntary openings of the doors; and the periodical visits of the sanitary inspector are more detested than those of the tax-gatherer. Yet the death-rate in the population is ex-

Digitized by Google

traordinarily low, save for an occasional disaster to the fishing boats or the visit of some sweeping epidemic. Sea-tanned women and weather-beaten men live in a "sluttish plenty," like that which characterised the interior of the Mucklebackets' cottage in *The Antiquary*. A very peculiar people in this nineteenth century, they keep themselves to themselves like the gipsies—never by any chance intermarrying with their agricultural neighbours.

Quite as exclusive are the colonies of colliers that you come upon somewhat further to the south. But very different is the aspect of their villages. Like those of the fishermen, they usually consist of a single street; but while the cottages of the former seem to have been run up anyhow, taking all sort of quaint and angular forms, those of the colliers have been built to contract by rule and line. Nothing can be more blank or bald than the barrack-like row, with the doors methodically arranged together by pairs, and all the dwellings turned out after a pattern. The burrowing habits of the mole seem scarcely suited to human beings; and belonging to a night-shift, and sleeping through the day, should after a time throw a blight upon the spirits. Yet the life is not without its material advantages, and there is variety in it, as well as terrible sensation. As to variety, it fluctuates between banyan times and feasting. When the trade is brisk and wages are high, the gnomes of the mine luxuriate in clover. We dare say that the stories of cottage pianos and champagne may have been mythical; but there can be no question that the colliers are the best of customers to the butchers; consuming every day, as a matter of course, the joints that are the luxury of the labourer's feast-days. And their houses, like those of the fishermen, are crammed with excellent mahogany furniture; there are four-post beds and eight-day clocks, elbow-chairs, and mirrors, and flaunting chromographs. But the collier, though he subscribes to his Union and Club, can never attain to the habit of saving. The slack times will come, or he is in the crisis of a strike, and then he has to fall back on his reserves of accumulated fat, like the bear in his summer case when he withdraws to his winter-quarters. The clothes follow the furniture piece by piece to the pawnbroker, or the furniture is mortgaged *en bloc* upon a bill of sale. Men who have been used to generous living get quickly out of condition; and the bulldogs and bull-terriers who have shared their steaks and sirloins, take to prowling in troops round the neighbourhood, voracious as jackals. When famine comes in at the door, kindness flies out at the windows; and wives and children are knocked about by men who are hungry, hopeless, and out of temper. Yet the colliers, under favourable circumstances, are a good-humoured and jovial set; and staunch comrades in adversity when distress is partial. Nothing delights them more than playing the liberal host, on such excuse as a wedding or a christening, a lying-in or a funeral. That they can develope a taste for the beautiful is not to be expected: although some of their settlements lie in what must once have been lovely country; and there must have been a

Digitized by Google

sore struggle in the heart of many a mine-owner before he consented to mangle those landscapes of his for gold. There in the bottom of the valley still flows the rippling stream, though its waters have long ago been turned to ink and all the trout have been poisoned. There still are some remnants of magnificent hanging woods, though the boughs have been blackened and the foliage blighted. The rooks have fled from the trees round the venerable Hall, and the park has been cut up into side-lines and tramways; while by way of compensation for cutting and levelling of the slopes, artificial eminences have been introduced into the scenery. Far and wide round the mouths of the coal mines rise those horrible mounds of cinders and refuse which echo the groanings and screamings from the pit, and even at night throw the deformities of the works into evidence by the lurid light of their smouldering fires.

But enough of the black diamond mines, where Spring herself seems as if she had come up through the galleries, with the tender green of her garments smirched with the foul drip from the side-shafts. Follow that grimy Acheron winding along among the cinder-heaps, up to its sources in the blue hills that break the sky-line to the westward, and you are in the peaceful solitudes of pastoral valleys. Peaceful and solitary at least as far as man is concerned, but mingling with the song of the linnets in the gorse thickets, and the sough of the soft spring breezes down the valleys, comes the bleating of the flocks upon a hundred hills. There, in the distance, is the dwelling of the farmer, on the peninsula formed by the lap of the little stream, and here immediately before you is a Northumbrian shepherd's cottage. It stands in the recess of a sheltered nook, whose sides reflect any sunshine that may be going, and from immediately behind it comes a concentration of bleating with the thin, piping treble of infantine voices. It is the middle of the lambing time, and the shepherd, always a thoughtful man, is overburdened for the moment with paternal anxieties. The nursing mothers are gathered in immediately under his eye, and within earshot of his bed. There are the pens of straw-padded hurdles to protect them as far as possible from the wind and rain; and heaped within their enclosure with trusses of litter. Confinements come with a rush, and the shepherd's personal attendance on the matrons in the straw must be unceasing. Much of course depends on the weather; and in bitter winds, or the late snow and hail-storms, his cares redouble. Yet it is a pretty sight, and he has his compensations when the lambs are thriving in comparatively genial weather, and he can count the rare losses on his fingers. In the winter storms he becomes even more care-laden. There is no settling comfortably down in his chair when the day's work is over, if the weather should be threatening a storm. He listens with a sinking heart to the murmurs of the rising wind; and in each rustle of the mountain-ash twigs against his walls fancies he can hear the sleet or hail beating heavily against his window. It may be the beginning of one of those tremendous snow-falls when the snow turns to a shroud; when the

Digitized by Google

drifts, heaped in the sheltered valleys by the eddies of wind, gradually bury the drowsy flock, as it huddles together for mutual warmth; when the sapless pasturage is hidden out of sight, and the starving sheep have scarcely strength to scrape for it; when the more distant ranges are inaccessible in the blinding drift, and he must possess his soul in such patience as he can muster, till he can venture forth in calmer weather to count up casualties. We may draw a veil over the melancholy walk, when, at each turn of the hills, he comes in hollow, beck, and brook on sheep in various stages of inanition, or on the corpses of those that have been smothered, starved, or drowned. Even in the bright summer days, when it is a pleasure to bask on the hill-sides, the reminiscences of these winter sorrows can seldom be absent from his thoughts.

Notwithstanding his cares and toils, the lonely life of the hill shepherd has the charm of excitement; and generally speaking he is a fairly well-educated man, who holds commune with books in the dearth of good company. We do not know that the cottager is more to be envied, who leads a far more uneventful existence in the richer scenery of the softer south. He likewise has his cares, and sufficient of them. His wages are never excessive, though his family very often is. Should he not have the good fortune of a permanent engagement, hard frosts or persistent rains may throw him out of employment, when money would be most welcome. The village tradesman stops his credit and duns for the trifling arrears of debt. His cottage may or may not be comfortable. His wife, who is always being brought to bed, in season and out of season, has her chronic ailments as well. For himself, constant exposure to damp and cold, and careless shifting of his working clothes, send him cramps and rheumatism with advancing years. He has saved nothing, and it is hardly to be expected that he should save. At the utmost he has contributed to a local club, which may possibly break in his debt, or compound for a percentage before he presses his claims on it. In times of slackness or sickness, failing the club, he has been lifted along by outdoor parochial relief; and when he looks forward to decrepitude in his declining years, it is the parish union he sees looming before him. It is a cheerless place of refuge for the close of an active life; and yet the thought of it brings inexpressible comfort to many a struggling poor man. Never having fared sumptuously, he has no great horror of the workhouse rations; and the regulations that make him a prisoner-at-large are compensated in a measure by the pleasures of idleness. What he feels most bitterly—and there we deeply sympathise with him—is the prospect of the separation from the wife of his bosom. His 'old woman' and he have had many words, and may have interchanged blows and porringers among other conjugal endearments. But they have borne many troubles together, and grown into each other's ways; and you cannot rend gnarled stems apart with the impunity with which you may bend the pliant saplings.

Digitized by Google

The English cottager begins the world young; though School Boards and stern inspectors are threatening to revolutionise his early habits. Before the girls seem well able to run alone, they are broken in to looking after the babies; and the sooner the boys can help the household expenses the better. There you see them set to frighten birds from the wheat—a pleasant occupation enough in the sunshine, but dismal in the east winds of an English spring, when all the blowing on them in the world will not keep life in the frozen fingers. More chilly work still is pulling turnips, which is among the next steps in the progress towards manhood; and then comes promotion to the dignity of waggoner's boy. He is up at half-past four or five, helping to feed the horses and put on the harness by candlelight in the stable: out on the damp fallows in the morning mists, limping along with chilblained feet and frost-bitten fingers. The youth or early manhood of the rural labourer is the time when he has his fullest experience of the pleasures of the senses. He is in the prime of his strength; is pretty sure of good wages; is generally well fed at his master's cost, and has only himself to think about and care for. He gives his mind and leisure time to his amusements; he has money enough to muddle himself with beer to his reasonable contentment; and if his tastes incline him to the society of the fair sex, he picks up some buxom young woman to keep company with. But flirtations, in England as in Scotland, sooner or later end in matrimony, and then he lands himself in the household life we have depicted.

His home is often charming to the eye, and comfortable enough within doors, especially in the summer when the door stands open. You may observe him, as you pass, seated at the tea-table, with his olive shoots of various sizes clustered around him, while his wife is busy over the tray and the kettle. The sweet scents from his flower beds are blowing in upon him, and there is a droning hum from his bee-hives against the gable that suits well with his drowsy mood when he has disposed of his bread and butter. If he steps out of doors to smoke his pipe, he feels an honest satisfaction in the signs of ease about him. The pig that grunts in the savoury sty at the farther corner of the garden supplies manure to the vegetable beds that provide his corpulence with nourishment in turn. There are no fowls, because they are bad gardeners; but there are apple and cherry trees that are profitable in good seasons. And, taken *en masse*, we know no prettier sight than one of those English villages, in a picturesque neighbourhood, that has grown up under the fostering care of generations of kindly squires. The scattered cottages, in their quaint originality and irregularity, are of all forms and sizes; they range from the farmhouse of some pretensions on the outskirts, backed up by its ample outbuildings, to the little lean-to with its single small room handed over by charity to the superannuated widow. They would seem to have been shaken down anyhow: some stand, in their gardens, end-on to the street; others have pushed themselves forward on the causeway; while not a few have modestly withdrawn themselves, and

Digitized by Google

are hidden almost entirely out of sight. Flowers and flowering shrubs, vegetables, and fruit trees appear to have been scattered broadcast, filling up each open space and corner where there is not a foot-path or a right of way. The place is a mass of white and pink blossoms in spring, and the thick shadows in the summer give a delightful sense of coolness. Of course it is not to every English cottager that the lines have fallen in places so pleasant. There are villages on the flats, in the marshes, or in the second-class grazing counties, where all is stale, flat, and repulsive: trees, like resident squires and rich parsons, are conspicuous by their absence; the farmers are hard-headed and hard-driven men who must drive hard bargains with their dependents; there are few gardens; there is no drainage, and but a slight landfall to carry off the sewerage. When disease breaks out in the poisoned wells, the parson and the sexton have busy times of it. But in most cases the English soil and climate throw a pleasing veil over our cottage exteriors. Even if cottage gardening is neglected, still there are copses and hedgerows and shady trees, and the more staring deformities of the ugly building are softened down by the growth of lichens and stonecrop.

The English cottager is seldom a literary character. Hitherto his education has been greatly neglected, and in the incessant preoccupations of his struggle for existence he soon forgets the imperfect lessons of his youth. The older men, who attend church regularly—sometimes, in the more outlandish districts, in the laced white smock-frocks of the olden time—are apt to find their profit in the sermon in the shape of a soporific. The simplest books are in a measure sealed to them; and when they try to spell their way along the *Pilgrim's Progress*, or turn their attention to the illustrated story that has been bestowed by the rector's wife, it is much as if a German student who had got half through Ollendorf were to sit down to amuse himself with a metaphysical German novel. The winter evenings are dull enough, though cut as short as may be by an early retirement. But all the cottager's excitements and amusements lie out of doors. Among the former are the great annual occasions when they earn extra wages in a press of work, associated with merriment and indulgences by immemorial custom. There is the hay-making, when there is a swishing symphony of scythes laying the swathes of the rich meadow grass behind them; when the beer cans stand under the spreading tree, and the beverage is liberally served out to the mowers; when the high-piled waggons go jolting along the lanes, leaving brown streamers that mark their progress among the branches that meet overhead. There is harvest, when the trimly-finished stacks gradually rise in the rick-yard, built by the hands of cunning workmen, who are the envy and admiration of their worse-paid fellows; when the gleaners, following the steps of the binders, carry home, by way of perquisite, the armfuls of wheat which are almost more grateful than the extra wages. Above all, in the country of the hop-gardens, there is hopping time, when every man, woman, and child—down to the babies, who are wrapped up

Digitized by Google

and laid to sleep under the hop-poles—gather in for the great business of picking over the bins. For once the laziest of the field-hands feel a common interest with the farmers, and the whole parish is excited over the chances of the crop and the weather. It is the earnings of the hop harvest that wipes off the outstanding bill at the village shop, that gives the children the new shoes for going to school through the mud in winter, and the mother and the daughters the gay bonnets with the ribbons that make them "respectable" for divine service.

Hopping, though hard work, with its frolic and merriment may almost rank among rural amusements; and the regular amusements for the most part are rather passive than active. Some of the more energetic of the younger men betake themselves to cricket or volunteering; and there is often a bit of turf set apart for quoits, or "a good dry skittle-ground" attached to the village public-house. But when a man has been tasking his bodily powers all the day, it is but natural that he should seek his recreation in repose. So far as our observation goes, the darling amusement of a rustic is leaning over a gate when the weather admits of it. His air of languid enjoyment is unmistakable, though nothing can be more deceptive than his appearance of contemplation. Next to gate-lounging comes beer-drinking, which, having the disadvantage of costing money, is not so invariably within his reach. Moreover, it involves the trouble of lounging further from his home, though too often, unfortunately, the trouble is a pleasure, and the pleasure grows into a passion. The periodical recreations which form eras in the uneventful rural lives are occasions of conviviality on a grander scale. There are the fairs and old-fashioned "wakes" and "statutes," where the people go for hiring in their younger days; or to show themselves to their acquaintances and gossip and drink, even if they have no intention of changing service. And there are the club feasts, which are enlivened by the discord of bands of music, and where they consume, in honour of their prudence and frugality, money that might make them comfortable when their strength has failed. Above all, they have the harvest homes, where, in the pleasant consciousness of pockets newly filled by a spurt of unusually profitable work, they stuff to satiety at their master's expense, by way of preparation for the singing and dancing that are to follow. Conservative as they are in their customs and instincts, their condition, as we have said, is gradually being changed in spite of them by the progress of philanthropy and scientific farming; by improvements in machinery and the introduction of steam power; and by increased facilities of intercommunication. But as yet the change has been slow, though it is steady; and if our pictures in their main features be true to nature, they are likely to remain so for many years to come.

Digitized by Google

The Guinea Box.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

NOTHING is more common in these days than to see advertisements at the libraries of "a guinea box" to be hired at this or that theatre for the evening. They probably belong to shareholders who have agreed to take a portion of their dividends in that shape, or to families who have got tired of going to the play sooner than they thought they should, and are glad to get back some portion of their luxurious investment. But in the days when I was young such things were less common, and there was a certain "guinea box" at Covent Garden for which three or four guineas were sometimes given by reason of the would-be hirers bidding for it contemporaneously on some popular night; for the box, though only holding six, was an excellent box in the grand tier, with a little withdrawing room attached to it, where you could have refreshments in private, and those who were acquainted with such matters knew that Box 16 at a guinea was a great bargain. Yet it was always advertised to be let at that price, and never by any chance occupied by its legitimate owners. The matter was openly discussed in play-going society at that time, but it had never reached my ears when I was at school at Blackheath at never mind what date, but during a certain December in which my father's lawyer, Mr. Tredgold, sent me an invitation to spend Saturday and Sunday with him in town, and accompany his family to the theatre.

My uncle and guardian, Mr. Ralph Tressilian, lived in the far north of England, and I had no connections, nor any friends in London, so that the proposition was even a greater treat than it would have been to most schoolboys. Moreover, it was enhanced by the fact that Lucy Tredgold was a very pretty girl, whom I thought most charming, and whom I believed to be expressly created to be my bride—though in that case she had been created a little early, for I was but sixteen at the time of which I speak, and she was twenty-one. That, however, was the only difference (though of course it had always existed) that had ever happened between us; moreover, I was tall and tolerably mature-looking for my years, with quite a distinct line of fluff on my upper lip, and in my new tail coat, which I was to wear that evening for the first time, might have been taken, I flattered myself, for an undergraduate of the University, or a gentleman cadet at Woolwich, at the very least. I remember the foot-

Digitized by Google

man at Mr. Tredgold's announced me as "Mr. Frank Garrard," without that fatal indecision between Mr. and Master that had hitherto marked my introductions into society.

I took my wine at dinner like a man, but (though this afterwards became a moot point) not too much of it, and comported myself in every way as belonging to that section of the human race entitled the "grown-ups," and one who had no connection whatever with that other and antagonistic section denominated the "young people." Sometimes, it is true, I looked for my handkerchief in a side pocket (where no side pocket was any more to be found), and occasionally experienced a sentiment of surprise at sitting suddenly upon a couple of tails (one of which had a six-bladed knife in it); but my presence of mind was always sufficient to conceal the embarrassment that followed upon those little *contretemps*.

My uncle Ralph was somewhat Puritanical in his ideas, and I had been brought up in his old Lancashire home with a strange mixture of strictness and laxity. I had been suffered to take my own way, that is, so far as country sports and amusements were concerned, but had been forbidden those of the town. My guardian, as it happened, had an especial objection to theatrical exhibitions of all sorts; so that, though I would not have had it known to Lucy for millions, this was the first occasion of my introduction to a theatre. To hear me talk, however, I flatter myself you would have thought I had had a seat in the "omnibus box" for years; and, after all, it is far more reasonable that a young fellow should wish to represent himself a little older than he is than that an old man should ape being young. In the former case it is a sort of natural defence, since inexperience and simplicity are always looked down upon.

The play which we were about to witness—*Hamlet*—I was perhaps better acquainted with than any of the party. They consisted wholly of Mr. Tredgold's family—namely, his wife, three daughters (of whom my charmer was the youngest), and a son, Gilbert Tredgold, of about twenty years of age. They were not given to reading, and (with one exception, which I need not indicate) struck me as somewhat commonplace; but they were very kind, as was the host himself, and I enjoyed their hospitality very much. Mr. Tredgold did not go to the play, having certain papers, he said, to look over. These were reported, however, by his offspring to be only newspapers. Papa could never by any chance, they said, be induced to move after dinner, and he only made business an excuse for stopping at home. Goodness knows I didn't want him to go, and should have been very well content to have escorted Lucy alone. Yet, for all my *tendresse* for her, I looked forward to the play itself, I remember, with quite as much pleasure as to her companionship, which showed what a mere simple hobbledehoy I was after all.

We dined early and arrived at the theatre in good time, which gave us an opportunity of admiring the box and its withdrawing room. So far as I knew every box had this addition to it, but I learnt, from what

Digitized by Google

was said, that this was not so, and also that No. 16 was a great bargain. It was next but one to the stage on the grand tier, and held four chairs in front and two behind very comfortably. At first the ladies occupied the former, but Gilbert Tredgold was very near-sighted, and presently, to my delight, Lucy changed places with him, so that I had her all to myself. The dear creature was sublimely ignorant of the plot of the piece (a rare thing in those days, when Shakespeare was much more acted, if not read, than he is at present), so that I had plenty to tell her, and it was told (so as not to disturb the audience) in a very low tone. The ghost of Hamlet's father had interested me immensely on his first appearance, but so soon as this change of position was effected my interest in the drama began to fail. The touch of Lucy's hand—for I ventured to place my own upon it occasionally to emphasise my explanations—sent a thrill through me such as the spectre could not compass; and as to Ophelia, I felt that I had an Ophelia of my own worth two of her, and that there would certainly be no necessity, so far as I was concerned, for her to go out of her mind or drown herself.

The play had not proceeded far when, to my great surprise, the door between our box and the retiring room was suddenly opened without noise, and in walked a lady of great beauty. She was tall and very dark; her dress was much more splendid than that of any of the Tredgold young ladies, and I particularly noticed that on her jet black hair, which was arranged in a manner I had never before seen, there was a circlet of diamonds, on which the rays from the chandelier sparkled like fire. She looked neither to left nor right, but moved straight on with a majestic sweep of her white satin train to the chair on which I sat. I rose at once (for politeness was not among the extras at our Blackheath seminary) and made room for her. She took the proffered seat rather coolly as I thought (but I was totally unacquainted with the manners of fine ladies), and without even the acknowledgment of a bow. What was still stranger, she took no notice of the Tredgolds, nor they of her. They retained their seats and gazed on the stage just as though there had been no increase in the number of the occupants of the box. With regard to those in the front row, I thought it quite possible that they were unaware of her presence, though the trail of her satin dress upon the carpet had been quite distinct to *my* ear; but the wonder was that Lucy herself seemed unconscious of having a new companion beside her. She knew, however, I had risen, for she inquired softly, so as not to interfere with the tones of the actors—

"What's the matter, Frank? Can't you see?"

She seemed to imagine that I was standing up merely to obtain a better view of the stage.

"It is the lady," whispered I, pointing to the new comer, who of course had her back to me.

"The lady?" replied Lucy, staring at her neighbour, as it appeared to me, very rudely; "I see no lady."

Digitized by Google

This I thought ruder still. Perhaps the individual in the white satin had had a quarrel with the female members of the Tredgold family, and this was their mode of showing it. But, if so, why should she have thus thrust her company upon them? Probably my astonishment, and even disgust, showed themselves on my countenance, for Lucy added severely—

"Do not glare at the wall like that, Mr. Garrard. You will arouse attention. I do wish you would sit down."

"Sit down?" replied I, in my turn a little annoyed; "I can't sit down on the lady's lap, and there is no other chair."

Then Lucy reached out her fan and touched her brother on the shoulder, and he left his chair and bent his head down while she whispered in his ear. I knew that she was talking about me, and not very pleasantly, but my whole attention was absorbed by the lady in white satin. She did not take the least notice of the movement in the box, nor of the performers on the stage, but gazed straight before her into vacancy with a most sad and, as it seemed to me, most self-reproachful face. I had heard of the impassive frigidity of the aristocracy, but if that was their manner I preferred that of the middle classes; her mute indifference seemed to freeze my very blood. Then some one took me by the arm, and whispered roughly—

"What the deuce is the matter with you, Frank? You have quite frightened my sister."

It was Gilbert Tredgold, who had been civil enough up to this time, though I fancied he had once or twice given himself airs over me on the strength of his four years' seniority. He spoke to me now as a man would speak to a foolish boy who had been playing some prank, and I felt very indignant.

"I have frightened nobody," I replied, "but I think it strange—and rather rude—that no one has introduced me to this lady; though indeed she has much more to complain of, if it comes to that, than I have."

"What lady? You are dreaming, Frank. There's no one here except ourselves."

"Hush," said I; "she must hear every word we say, though she appears so abstracted."

"Just step with me into the back room," said Gilbert.

I followed him mechanically, my eyes still lingering on the silent lady in white satin.

He shut the door behind him. "Look here, Frank: you must not go into that box again, nor into the society of my sisters. You are not in a fit state."

"Do you mean to say I'm drunk?"

"Yes, I do. Lucy thinks that it is the excitement of the play, and it is well she does; I don't wish to undeceive her." He had his back against the door, and was very angry: so was I; but I was not drunk, as he imagined. I should have been very willing to try conclusions with

Digitized by Google

him in a "rough and tumble," but I called to mind that I was his father's guest, and that any disturbance in the theatre would be very distressing to his family.

"You are very rude," I said, "and I am not surprised at it, since you can treat a lady as you have done. But I don't want to make a row. I will go home to your father and state exactly what has happened.

"You couldn't do a wiser thing," he replied gravely; "the fresh air will revive you. You can find your way out, I suppose?"

I did not reply to that sarcasm, but stalked haughtily from the room, like Hamlet's father's ghost when he was offended.

I went straight back to Mr. Tredgold, and found the old gentleman still over his papers—the evening ones.

"Good gracious! are you all come back already?" he exclaimed peevishly. It was perhaps excusable, since the old gentleman had hoped to have a quiet evening to himself; but I began to think that the family rudeness was hereditary.

"No, sir," I answered; "no one has come back except me. I have been grossly insulted by your son Gilbert."

"Stuff and nonsense!" he said; "Gilbert never insults anyone. Whatever his faults he is a most good-natured young fellow, though a little hasty in his temper. Now tell me what has happened. You look excited. I am afraid you took a glass of wine or so at dinner more than you have been accustomed to."

That was very true, for at my Blackheath school wine was an extra, though politeness was not; but I certainly had not taken too much wine. My mind, indeed, was sufficiently clear to make me understand how important it was to prove that I was sober.

"No," said I; "I was particularly abstemious, Mr. Tredgold. Observe the long words I am using without making the least mistake. Give me anything out of the newspaper to read—the city article or the share list—and try whether I am drunk or not."

"I never said you were drunk, my good lad," said the lawyer, half amused, half touched, by my earnest pleading.

"No, sir; but your son said it. I am not used to misbehave myself in the presence of ladies, nor to be accused of doing so."

"Come, sit down and tell me quietly what happened, Frank."

So I sat down, and told him all, not omitting my own view of the cut direct which had been administered to the strange lady by the members of his family.

"It is very curious," said he, when I had done; "but I acquit you, Frank, of all imputation of having been intoxicated; I also excuse Gilbert for having made it; it was a very natural mistake for him to have fallen into. My opinion is that you were in a state of great mental excitement, produced partly by the fact of being at the theatre and partly by the play itself, which gave your ideas a certain supernatural bias. You were just in the frame of mind to suffer from an optical delusion."

Digitized by Google

"But do you mean to say I did not see that lady in white satin?"

"On the stage you may have done so. I don't know whether they dress Ophelia on the stage (like Tilburina) in white satin nowadays, but in that box you certainly did not see her. Now just go to bed, Frank, like a good fellow. I don't offer you supper because you'll be better without it. There's your flat candle; good night and pleasant dreams."

I felt the old lawyer was treating me very tenderly, since he had nothing but my word to go upon against (for I had admitted as much) that of his whole family; but I was by no means amicably disposed towards *them*.

In the morning, when I came down to breakfast, everyone was studiously polite to me, and evidently determined to make no allusion to what had happened on the previous evening; at times I caught Gilbert Tredgold glancing at me with an amused expression, and then turning away with a sort of bloated look and his eyes half out of his head like a lobster's. If I had attempted an explanation I think it would have been the death of him, but I was not at all restrained from it on that account. I was too proud to enter anew upon any justification of my conduct; and as to any apology, it was clear that it ought to have come from them and not from me.

Before I concluded my visit, however, I did address a few words of remonstrance to Lucy concerning the practical joke, as I termed it, which had been played upon me in the theatre, and to which she had been an accessory. I didn't care about it myself, I told her, so much, though I thought it unkind; but that they should have all agreed to ignore the presence of their lady visitor showed, I thought, bad feeling.

"My dear Mr. Garrard," she said, with quite unwonted severity, "I had hoped you had made up your mind to say nothing about that unpleasant subject; let bygones be bygones, I do beg."

I had no idea (at that time) that a young woman could speak so sharply.

"Well, I never!" cried I, in a tone which betrayed, perhaps, my astonishment at her impudence, for she replied still more tartly—

"Nor I either; though, indeed, I have read in *David Copperfield* of a young gentleman misbehaving himself in a theatre in a similar fashion."

I remembered, of course, that on that occasion David had been intoxicated, and the injustice of the allusion hurt me very much. I did not answer, but looked so distressed that her heart melted.

"Agnes was very much shocked at him," she continued, with a smile; "but afterwards, you know, upon expressing his sorrow, she forgave him."

"I think she even gave him a kiss," said I boldly, but in a very tender voice.

"I don't remember that," she answered, looking at her toes. "Agnes was rather prudish in that way."

Digitized by Google

Which of course was an invitation; and so ended very pleasantly my experience of the Guinea Box for that time.

CHAPTER II.

If it is true that there is "no such thing as forgetting," it is certain that we so often mislay the remembrance of things that it is almost as bad (or good) as though we did forget. My adventure with the lady in white satin was certainly noteworthy enough, yet week by week, and month by month, it faded as her satin itself would have done, till in a few years there was little of the original material left in my mind. I knew that the thing had happened, but I could not have sworn to the details as when they were fresh in my memory. I met the Tredgolds from time to time, and when a sly allusion, as sometimes happened, was made to the circumstance, I found myself replying to their aspersions with less and less of vigour. I knew I had not been drunk, I knew I had not been unreasonably excited by the play, and yet that much-wronged lady in white became in a certain degree unreal even to myself. It was still one of those experiences that one cannot explain (and which happen to more of us than care to confess to them), but I no longer cudgelled my brains for an explanation of it. The circumstance was still very strange, but (which had not struck me so forcibly in my boyhood) it was almost as much so that a respectable family like the Tredgolds should have treated a lady visitor with such rudeness; and if they had done so, it was still stranger that they should make a jest of it.

Seven years afterwards, and when I had just taken my degree at the University, I was dining with some friends at the Oxford and Cambridge Club, one of whom happened to propose a visit to Covent Garden Theatre. As the office was closed he sent out to the librarian's for a box, and when it came he observed, "By Jove, this is a cheap business; we have got the Guinea Box." He was a man about town, and knew No. 16; but upon the rest of us it made no impression. After dinner we went upstairs to smoke, and consequently arrived at the theatre at a late and fashionable hour. I chanced to be the first of the party, and on stepping out of the little room into the box I turned and stopped the others. "We have made a mistake," I said; "there is some one in possession already."

"Oh, pooh!" said my friend the man about town; "we're all right enough. Do you suppose I don't know No. 16?"

"But there's a lady in it," said I, "sitting there alone."

"Then let me look at her," was the characteristic rejoinder. He pushed his way in and exclaimed, "What lady?"

"Why, there," said I, pointing to where she sat—"the lady in white satin."

As I spoke the words the whole scene of seven years before recurred to me with vivid distinctness. I saw the Tredgolds unconscious—wil-

Digitized by Google

fully, as I had thought—of the intruder's presence. I saw Lucy touch her brother, and heard him whisper in that quick, remonstrant tone, "What the deuce is the matter with you?" Only this time it was somebody else that said it. One of my companions had taken hold of my arm, and the rest were staring at me while I stared at the lady.

"I have seen her before," I muttered: "it's the same person; I could swear to her among a thousand."

"My dear Garrard, you're not well," said some one—it was Grantham, my college chum—"just come with me," and he led me into the anteroom.

"But the lady?" I said; "they have sat down by her as though she was not there."

"There's no lady there; you're dreaming. That champagne at the Club is not a sufficiently dry wine."

"What, do you mean to say, as the other people did, that I am drunk?"

"I don't know what the other people said, but if I did not know your habits I should say you had *delirium tremens*."

"It must be the box," said I in amazement—"the box must be haunted!"

"Very likely," was Grantham's grave rejoinder. "Let us get out of the box and into the open air."

He led me unresistingly into the street, and we walked round Covent Garden together discussing the matter. I told my friend what had happened on the previous occasion, and he pretended to explain my present hallucination, as he termed it, by the association of ideas. "You recognised the box, and then the scene recurred to you." There was something in that (for the scene *had* recurred to me), but not enough to shake the evidence of my own senses a second time. "I will not go back to the theatre," said I, "because I don't want to make a row, but I will sift this mystery to the very bottom."

"Do," said Grantham, "and let me know what remains, if it's anything beyond a headache."

Whereupon I went to my lodgings, and sat up half the night with a cigar in my mouth and my considering cap on. In my friends' eyes I had made a fool of myself twice in box No. 16; and I was resolved that it should not happen again. Nor should this be effected by absenting myself from the theatre. I meant to examine into that box very carefully, and somehow or other to knock the bottom out of it.

After breakfast next morning I called at the library, where, as I saw in the paper, the "Guinea Box" at Covent Garden was advertised as usual, and requested to see the proprietor of the establishment. That great man, it seemed, did not generally put in an appearance in connection with any matter under a stall for the season, but nevertheless I gained admission to his august presence.

Digitized by Google

"Pray, sir," said I, "have you ever heard any complaints of your Guinea Box?"

"Complaints?" he said. "Far from it; it is one of the best and by far the cheapest I have to let."

Though his voice was firm, it struck me that his manner was a little embarrassed.

"When good things are cheap," said I, "there is generally a reason for it. I have twice had reason to be very much dissatisfied with that box. A lady in white satin is in the habit of intruding herself there."

I saw a sudden change in his face, which convinced me he was not hearing the information for the first time, but he answered coolly enough, "If that is so, the boxkeeper is the proper person to apply to; and if she annoys you, the police. I have not the honour of knowing your name, by-the-bye," he added.

I gave him my card, and he looked at it attentively.

"In a matter of this kind I cannot advise you," he continued; "it is not my affair at all. You must complain to the people at the theatre."

"I have reason to believe," replied I, "that that would be useless. I intend to write to the papers to warn folks against the Guinea Box."

"Then you'll have an action for libel brought against you, young gentleman, as sure as you live. The box belongs to a gentleman of the highest respectability and position, and has been placed in my hands for these twenty years."

"And I am to understand from you definitely that no such complaint has ever been made to you as I make to-day?"

"I decline to answer any such question, sir," replied the librarian.

"Very good. Do you also decline to give me the name of the proprietor of the box?"

"Well, you could find that out for yourself by application at Covent Garden; but I have no objection to save you that trouble: the box belongs to Mr. Ralph Tresillian."

"What, of Windbarrow Hall?" exclaimed I in astonishment. "Why, that's my uncle!"

The librarian's face exhibited incredulity, not unmixed, as it seemed to me, with positive alarm.

"I had a letter from him this very morning," said I, producing the envelope. "You recognise, I suppose, that handwriting? Now, since you know who I am, perhaps you will be a little more communicative?"

"No, Mr. Garrard," he returned after a pause; "I must consider my duty to my employer. I decline to admit anything that may tend to depreciate his property. If you have anything to say against Box 16, say it to *him*."

As my uncle's letter had contained an invitation to Windbarrow for that very week, I was not much discontented with this reply. The librarian was evidently only doing his duty, so we parted on good terms.

Digitized by Google

I noticed that he looked at me with great curiosity, and even came to the door of his establishment and watched me down the street.

Hitherto a visit to my uncle's residence had not been very attractive to me, but I looked forward to it now with great interest and excitement. It was a huge mansion on the skirts of a Yorkshire moor, with a moat round it without fish, and was half a dozen miles from everywhere. The place wanted at least a dozen guests in residence to make it cheery, and my uncle seldom saw any company except at dinner. I found him on this occasion quite alone, and after we had dined, and a bottle of port of fabulous antiquity had been placed between us, he began talking of the family property.

"You are of age now, Frank, and should know something about it, for what is mine will be yours," and then he gave me some hereditary information, which ought to have been more attractive to me than it was. The amount of rental was interesting enough, but I always hated what a philosopher of my acquaintance calls the "disgusting details" of business matters. When he had quite done I said in my offhand way, "And then there's that box at Covent Garden."

My uncle pushed his glass half off the table as he replied, "How on earth came you to know I possessed such a thing? What box?"

"Box 16—the Guinea Box, as they call it. I've been in it more than once, to my sorrow;" and I told him in the simplest manner what I had seen there.

"Your experience is very curious," said my uncle drily, "but of course not inexplicable. It is evident that theatrical performances affect your nerves. I never approved of them myself for other reasons."

"I am quite certain, uncle, that I actually saw in Box 16 what I have just described to you. Nothing will ever shake my conviction on that point."

"Then we won't discuss it, Frank," was the quiet reply. "Have you had enough wine? Very good. I have some letters to write, so I will leave you to your cigar, which I remark with regret has become a necessity to most young men."

Uncle Ralph was not a person to be subjected to cross-examination by anybody, or to be induced to talk on any subject that was displeasing to him, and after the disclosure of his benevolent intentions towards myself it would have been the height of ingratitude and imprudence to offend him in any way; so I said nothing more about the matter.

After breakfast the next morning, much to my surprise, my uncle asked me to come with him into the picture gallery. "Some of your ancestors, I am told, want cleaning," he said, "and I want to have your opinion as to whether it is worth while to go to that expense."

For my part it struck me that a little washing would have done them all a world of good, but I was very careful to express myself respectfully. When we had settled which were to be sent to the picture cleaners, he opened the oak door of a little closet, and produced three or

Digitized by Google

four other portraits. "I have never been able to find room for these," he said, setting them one by one against the wall; "in case you marry and have a family, Frank, we must have a new gallery built, to—— What's the matter? What are you staring at your great-aunt like that for?"

"That's the woman!" I exclaimed; "that is the woman I saw in the box!"

"Pooh! nonsense! Because she's painted in white satin?"

"No, no; that is her face!" cried I. "She looks happier in the picture, though not more handsome; she has not that look of pain and yearning that she had in the theatre. But that's the woman."

"Well, that's your great-aunt, Mrs. Barnard. I am bound to say there is a story about her in connection with the place in which you think you saw her. Are you sure you never heard of it?"

"Quite sure," I said, with my eyes fixed on the portrait with a fascination I could not resist. "What did she do?"

"She ran away from her husband with a Captain Colville of the Guards. The scoundrel met her by appointment in that very box, No. 16, and fled with her the same night to Brussels. Barnard followed him and called him out. They were both shot, and it was understood (though none who knew her saw her afterwards) that the woman perished miserably by her own hand."

"I have seen her," said I confidently.

"Well, I don't know," returned my uncle doubtfully. "It is certainly very curious, and, since you have heard so much, I will tell you all. I put the picture in your way on purpose to see if you would recognise it; perhaps I was wrong, but it is now easier to go on with the thing than to get out of it. Do you remember your cousin Frederic?"

"Frederic Parton? No, I never saw him. I only know that the poor fellow died mad in India."

"He didn't die mad; he died of sunstroke; but he was supposed by some people to be mad before he went out. That was because he saw the lady in white satin in box No. 16 at Covent Garden. People who see ghosts nowadays, and especially in public places, are naturally thought mad."

"But did *you* think him mad?" I inquired.

"No, I didn't. I thought there was something in the matter more than a mere delusion from this circumstance: John Parton, his father, had seen the ghost before him."

"Another witness!" exclaimed I; "it is most marvellous."

"Yes; and the testimony agrees with yours in one curious particular: in both cases there were people in the box with them, who didn't see it; but *they* saw it plain enough. The lady appears, it would seem, only to blood relations."

"Did you ever see her yourself, uncle?"

"No; I never go to theatres. The box came into my possession

Digitized by Google

from the Partons, but I have never used it. The librarian in London knows the whole story, because your cousin Frederic made a row about it, just as you did. That is why the box is let so cheap. He has it from me, for almost nothing, upon the understanding that only a guinea shall be charged for it. People ought not to be exposed to risks, however small, without having a corresponding advantage. Some folks, of course, would pay ten times the money for the chance of seeing the lady, but, as a general rule, those who have hired a box expect to have it to themselves."

This business view of the matter would have tickled me a good deal had I not been so personally interested in it; my uncle's notion that the apparition only appeared to relatives seemed to be a correct one, but it made the whole affair more eerie and tremendous.

"I shall never rest, uncle," said I, "till I have fathomed this mystery. Perhaps the poor lady has some secret to disclose to us."

"She'll never tell it to *me*," returned my uncle confidently, "and if you take my advice, you will not give her a third opportunity of telling it to you. She was a bad woman and a disgrace to her family. Moreover," he added, as he replaced the picture in the cupboard, "the evil that she did lives after her, for she depreciates the price of our family box."

This style of talk, especially upon a serious subject, was by no means in accordance with my uncle's character, and I felt convinced it was affected in order to dispel any morbid feelings which his revelations might have aroused in me. As a matter of fact, however, curiosity rather than alarm had the upper hand with me. I should have liked to have started for London within the hour and taken the Guinea Box at Covent Garden for that very night. Upon the whole, as, notwithstanding my uncle's advice, I was resolutely determined on pursuing the matter, I thought it best to appear as indifferent as I could, and after awhile we dropped the subject. This was evidently what he wished to happen, for he never recurred to it again throughout my visit.

For my part, however, so far from forgetting it, I thought of little else, and when the time came for my departure had laid down a plan for my interview with the lady in white satin. I had two cousins—both descendants of hers—in London, one a clergyman and one a barrister, and I determined to enlist the assistance of the Church and the Law in investigating the matter. I would invite my kinsmen to the Guinea Box, and see what they thought of the family ghost.

I left for London by the mail train on a date (March 5, 1856), which many had cause to remember, and all through the night, as the swaying train sped through the darkness, I was making up my mind what to say and do when I next came into that supernatural presence. It was a ghastly night journey, and made more so by the fact that, as we drew near London, the lurid glow of some vast conflagration filled the eastern sky. Too much occupied with another subject, however, to make any inquiries

Digitized by Google

about the fire on our arrival at the terminus, I went straight to my lodgings and to bed.

Before breakfast the next morning my first act was to look in the newspaper to see whether the Guinea Box was to be let for that night. The advertisement was there as usual, but in the body of the paper there was a piece of intelligence that contradicted it in a very decisive manner—"TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF COVENT GARDEN THEATRE BY FIRE."

The previous night had been that of the famous masked ball with which its entertainments had been brought to an end for ever; and with it of course had perished Box 16 and all hope of explanation of its mystery.

JAMES PAYN.

Digitized by Google

The Eyrbyggja Saga.

In the *Cornhill Magazine* for July 1879, I gave a very brief account of the place taken in the history of literature by the four great Sagas which form the crowning glory of Icelandic imaginative writing. At the same time I attempted to give a sketch of one of these—*Aigla*, or the *Egils Saga*. In so doing I had the disadvantage of translating, into language of necessity terse and ineffective, a story the very charm of which lies in the deliberate and old-world manner of its telling; but I had also the advantage of dealing with a work complete and vertebrate in itself. When the reader has passed the long genealogical preface to *Aigla*, the history of its hero continues to demand his full attention to the close, and gives a progressive charm to every chapter. But *Eyrbyggja*, with which I propose to deal to-day, possesses none of this conciseness of composition. It covers a period of at least 140 years; it treats of a vast number of persons very vaguely related to one another, or not related at all; and, instead of possessing a single hero or central thread of action, it is nothing more nor less than a chain of desultory stories hung upon a thin cord of genealogy. But they are charming stories, as pathetic and as mysterious as any to be found in Icelandic literature, and following so closely one on another as to make the Saga in which they occur one of the most precious relics of Northern antiquity that we possess.

The word *Eyrbyggja* means the story of the Eyrbyggjar, or people that lived on the peninsula of Eyri or the Island. The full name of the book is *Saga Thórsnesinga, Eyrbyggja, ok Alptfirdinga*—that is to say, it has to do with the families that settled in Thórsnes and Eyri peninsulas, and along the shores of Alptafjord. This limits it geographically to the northern coast of the great promontory of Snjófjaelsnes, which runs out westward far into the Atlantic, dividing Broad Fjord from Faxa Fjord, so in the centre of the west coast of Iceland. Dr. Vigfussen is of opinion that it was originally put together from several sources by Sturla the Lawman, about the year 1250. At the very close of the Saga, where it speaks of the moving of Tunga Church and the shifting of Snorri's bones, the writer speaks of a remark made by Gudny, the mother of the Sturlings, as though he had personally spoken with her; she died in 1221. It is, moreover, obvious that it was written before the fall of the Icelandic commonwealth in 1262; and from all these and other indications the eminent scholar just cited believes it to belong to the middle of the thirteenth century, and to be the work of the Broad

Digitized by Google

Fjord school of saga-writers at their most brilliant epoch. If we turn from the date of composition to the period of which the Saga treats, we find some difficulty in stating the latter in brief terms. It opens about the year 890; it passes over a period of thirty years; and the events which crowd the final pages took place between 1010 and 1031.

To attempt to follow chapter by chapter the desultory and disconnected plan of this Saga would only be to weary the reader. I shall therefore merely attempt to tell, in language as close to that of the original as possible, a few of the excellent stories that it contains. The *Eyrbyggja* opens with an account of Ketil Flatnose, a Norwegian warrior, who was forced against his will to lead the army of King Harald against the Westlanders, and who rebelled, sailed off, and took possession of Orkney as his own. His son, Björn, remained in Norway and defended his father's lands, for which he was outlawed, and would have been slain but for the protection offered him by an old viking named Thorolf Mostrarskegg, who provided him with a long-ship to go to Iceland. This happened in the year 884, ten years after the first settlement of Iceland by Ingolf Arnasson. Before he let the young man go, however, Thorolf "went to *fréttar*," or to ask the oracle of Thor, his *ástvinr* or dear familiar deity; and the oracle definitely recommended the exodus to Iceland. So Thorolf determined to go himself, and with his household, his goods, his gods, and a goodly following of his friends, he accompanied Björn westwards over the sea. As soon as they had cleared the southern and south-western promontories of Iceland, and had reached Faxa Fjord, Thorolf threw the posts of his high-seat, on one of which was graven the image of Thor, into the sea, and swore that he would settle where these came to shore. But as soon as the posts were thrown into the water, the wind or tide took them northwards, round the great headland of Snowfellness, into Broadfirth. The posts were finally driven into a bay, called Hofsvág, halfway up the southern shore of Broadfirth, and there Thorolf landed. He took possession of the whole peninsula between Hofsvág and Alptafjord, and this he called Thorsness. The centre of this peninsula is formed by an isolated mountain, which he named Helgafell, or the Holy Hill. Thorolf encouraged the idea that this mountain was sacred and mysterious, and on its western slope he built himself a great house.

One of the first episodes in *Eyrbyggja* deals with the sacred nature of this mountain. Thorsteinn the Fisher, Thorolf's son and heir, shifted the dwelling-place of the family from the slope of Helgafell to the mountain itself. One evening in the autumn, when Thorsteinn was out fishing, his herdsman, as he was watching his flock, suddenly perceived that Helgafell was open towards the north, and that a great fire blazed inside. Listening, he heard, moreover, a loud noise of shouting and blowing of horns, and after that, as he tried to distinguish words, he thought he heard one who bade Thorsteinn welcome, and called him to sit beside his dead father on the high-seat. The herdsman told this

Digitized by Google

vision in the evening to Thora, Thorsteinn's wife, and next morning men came with the tidings that Thorsteinn had been drowned at the fishing. He was five-and-twenty years old when he died, and at the same age his son Thorgrim was murdered at a banquet by his brother-in law Gisli.

The real hero of the Saga, however, if it can be said to have a hero, is Snorri Thorgrimsson, the grandson of the last-mentioned. He seems to have been born about the year 963, and quite early, when he was only thirteen, he turned his uncle Börk out of the house at Helgafell and took possession himself. He was a man of middle height, of slender build, handsome to look at, with regular features and a bright complexion, with light flaxen hair and a red beard; he was so wise and cunning that friends and foes alike came to him for counsel. With this portrait of an intellectual Icelander we may compare that of his foster-brother and follower Arngrim, who was called Styrr, or Fight, because of his brutal temperament. Styrr is the type of the turbulent Icelandic noble whose one idea was to kill his immediate rival. He is described to us as a very powerful and burly man, with a prominent nose, with great bones in his face, light-red hair, a bald forehead, the skin bronzed, and with large, beautiful eyes. He was full of all intemperate and angry devices. In this list of characteristics we see drawn very plainly before us the outer and physical nature of the man, and we can understand how it was that the democracy, left in such hands, passed through a brief and splendid period of authority in the north of Europe, only to sink exhausted under the blow that it received from within. The murderous passions of the great Icelandic nobles were more dangerous to the welfare of the state than any inclemency of the climate, or any attacks from foreign nations.

In none of the Sagas are there more or better witch-stories than in the *Eyrbyggja*. Considerable space is taken up with an account of the rivalry between two great witches, Geirrid and Katla. Odd, the son of Katla, had taken occasion of a free fight between two of the great families to cut off the hand of a worthy woman named Audi. By her divinations Geirrid discovered this, and reported it to the relations of Audi, who thereupon rode over to Holt, where Odd and his mother lived, in order to revenge themselves. When they reached Holt there were no men in the house, but Katla sat on the women's seat and was spinning yarn with her maidens. Arnkel and his companions burst in and asked where Odd was. Katla replied that he had gone away to Breidavík. "But if he had been at home," she said, "he would not have feared to meet you, for we have confidence in your justice." "Nevertheless," said Arnkel, "we will have a look round." But they could not find Odd, so off they rode. On the way home, Arnkel suddenly stopped, remembering that Katla had been spinning yarn on a distaff. "Perhaps," he said, "Katla has bewitched us, and that was her son Odd, whom she made to look like a distaff." So back they went to

Digitized by Google

Holt, and when Katla saw them coming she began to comb Odd's hair and to cut it. In ran Arnkel and his men, and there stood Katla, who seemed to be playing with a goat, and trimming its beard and hair. So they ransacked the house again, but found no Odd anywhere. When they had ridden some distance Arnkel said to his men, "Do you think that goat can have been Odd? Let us go back, and see if we can catch Katla this time." But Katla saw them coming, and told Odd to lie down in the ash-pit. So they came in and searched everywhere, but found no living thing, except a little pig that was rolling himself in the ashes. In their annoyance, they snatched up the spindle and hewed it in pieces. Then Katla smiled and said: "When you go home to-night, you need not say you did nothing here at Holt, since you have destroyed a spindle." So they went back again, but when they were halfway home they met the other witch, Geirrid, with a blue mantle over her shoulders, and she persuaded them to turn back once more. When Katla saw them coming, and a blue figure amongst them, she said, "That must be Geirrid; it will be no use trying ocular delusions any longer." So this time she hid Odd under the bench where she was sitting. But Geirrid walked up to her, and throwing a seal's skin over her head, commanded the men to bind her and then break up the bench. So they found Odd at last, and hanged him, and when they took him to the gallows, he said that his wicked mother was the cause of all his misfortunes. Then the people stoned Katla to death, under the sacred mountain, as was the practice with witches in Iceland before the introduction of Christianity.

But by far the most curious stories of witchcraft and enchantment are those connected with the name of Thorolf Lame-foot. He was a man of an extremely jealous and sulky disposition, who had quarrelled with all his neighbours, and who could not keep the peace even among his own thralls. His son Arnkel, on the contrary, was a man of prodigious energy and courage, but gentle and humane in all his dealings: certainly, it would seem, the individual who possessed most personal influence in the West Firths in that generation. We gather from various expressions in the Saga that Arnkel had wider views of polity than his neighbours, and that, had he lived, his vigour and excellence would have done much to preserve the commonwealth. Arnkel resisted the unjust claims of his father, and even thwarted Thorolf in his attempts to browbeat his thralls and farmers. Hence, during the last years of the old man's life, father and son were entirely estranged. But one day Thorolf rode over to his son's house at Bólstad, and proposed that they should be friends again. Arnkel was delighted, but when he found that his father's reason for making a pact was to obtain his help in robbing Snorri of his woodlands at Krákuness, he refused, and the old man went away very angry. He came home that night looking so grim that nobody dared to speak to him; he sat down in the high-seat, ate nothing, said nothing, and remained there sitting when the others went

Digitized by Google

to bed. Next morning he was sitting there still, but he was dead. His wife sent a message to her son Arnkel, for no one dared to touch the old man, he looked so horrible. Arnkel took him by the shoulders, but had to put forth all his strength to swing the body out of the high-seat, and then they buried him. Nothing happened at first; but as soon as Arnkel had put all things in order, and had gone home to Bólstad, strange rumours began to creep about. People began to feel very uncomfortable after sunset, and towards the end of the summer it began to be whispered that old Thorolf was moving about. The oxen became bewitched that had drawn him to the grave, and all the cattle that came near his cairn went mad and knocked themselves to pieces. The shepherd that kept flocks near the grave declared that Thorolf chased him at sundown, and one day they found him dead, his whole body coal-black, and every bone broken. The shepherd was buried in Thorolf's cairn, but things grew worse and worse. The very birds fell dead as they flew over the valley. In the winter the ghost of Thorolf grew still bolder; it came and howled outside the house, and even came inside, and frightened the housewife. She died before the winter was over, and was buried beside her husband. After that the ghost wandered all over the neighbourhood, and killed or frightened away almost all the inhabitants. In the spring Arnkel came and dug up the body of his father; it looked very terrible; but his men put it on a sleigh with oxen, and would have carried it to a burial-ground, but the oxen went mad and dashed into the sea, leaving Thorolf's body on a little hillock. Arnkel built a cairn over it, and the ghost was quiet thenceforward as long as Arnkel lived.

But Arnkel was not doomed to live long; his gifts and virtues roused the envy of the turbulent sons of Thorbrand, the foster brothers of Snorri and Styrr. One winter night they were all feasting with Snorri at Helgafell, when the question rose, who was the greatest man in Iceland, and some said Snorri, because of his wit and skill; and some said Styrr, because of his gigantic stature and physical force; but Thorleiff Kimbi rose and said, "What is the use of tiring ourselves with wrangling about what every man can see with his own eyes?" "Why! what is your opinion, Thorleiff, since you think this so easy a matter to decide?" "Without doubt Arnkel is the greatest man." "Why do you say that?" they asked. "Because it is the plain truth. Snorri and Styrr count only as one man for their friendship's sake, and that one man is not so strong as Arnkel, for none of Arnkel's house-folk lie dead by his homestead *úgildir*, for whom no weregild or money of atonement has been claimed; but Snorri's man, Hauk, whom Arnkel killed, lies here in that disgrace." When the feast was over, Snorri went down with the sons of Thorbrand to their ship, and as he parted from Thorleiff Kimbi, he gave him an axe, and said, "Here is an axe, Thorleiff, which I give you; it has a long shaft, but yet it will not reach Arnkel's head when he makes hay at Örlygsstod, if you throw it all the way from your home at Alpta-

Digitized by Google

fjord." So they parted, agreeing that when they found an opportunity of slaying Arnkel, they would unite to do so. Early that winter there came a severe frost, and the fjords were frozen over. One of Thorleiff's shepherds, Freysteinn the Knave, was keeping his sheep one moonlight night just before Yule, when he saw Arnkel, who had been very busy all day, go over to Örlygsstad to fetch hay at midnight. He had three thralls with him, and two sleighs. The shepherd told the sons of Thorbrand, and then crossed over to Helgafell to rouse Snorri. He waked Snorri, who looked out and asked what it was? Freysteinn answered: "The old eagle has just flown to his carrion at Örlygsstad!" So Snorri and Styrr rose and put on their garments and roused their men, and nine in number they set out in sleighs over the ice. At Alptafjord they met Thorbrand's sons, six in number. But as they came to Örlygsstad, Arnkel saw them coming, and sent his thralls back in one of the sleighs to fetch help, for they were too frightened to fight for him. There was a fence built round the haystack some feet from the ground, and solid, to protect the hay. Arnkel took the iron runner out of his sleigh, and leaping up on the fence, set his back against the haystack. The fifteen men set upon him without a word; but they could not reach him from the ground, while his runner broke their spears; at last the runner itself snapped against the icy corner of the fence, and Arnkel, snatching up his spear and shield, sprang up on to the haystack itself, and fought there a long while. But at last Styrr hewed open his head and killed him. So they buried his body in the hay and drove back again, before help could come from Bólstad. In considering this ferocious story, we must not think that it showed any special cowardice on the part of the murderers to attack a single man with a force of fifteen. Several of the fifteen were thralls, and probably took no part in the fighting; while the others would each have taken his death with courage and equanimity from the hands of a similar group of foemen. What the story does show, in an unusually clear light, is the reckless waste of valuable lives which the Icelandic nobility allowed themselves in their great age. They were a people singularly rich in all virile and brilliant gifts, but they had no notion of husbanding these treasures, and they spilt their best blood in internal quarrels, which there was nothing but the most trivial personal jealousy to justify.

The graphic picture of the frosty moonlight night, when Arnkel was slain, is paralleled a little later on in the Saga by a description of rough winter weather, which is worth giving in the picturesque language of the original. The descriptions of nature which enliven the Icelandic Sagas have an exactitude and a realistic power which give them a value superior to anything else of the kind to be found in mediæval literature:—

Björn now went home to Kamb, and took there *bústjórn* (the household management), for that his father was then dead. He began his journeys in the winter over the moorland to visit Thurid. And though that angered Thorodd, he did not see how to prevent it; for he said in his mind that he had come ill out of it the last time, and he saw that Björn was now a much stronger man than before. Thorodd

Digitized by Google

bought that winter from Thorgrim the witch, that she should raise a tempest for Björn whenever he came across the moorland. So one day, when Björn went to Froda, and in the evening wished to go home again, there was misty weather, and it rained a little, and he was rather late for starting. When he came up upon the moorland, the weather grew very cold, and there was sleet; it became so dark, that he could not see the path before him. After that the storm came on, with such heavy rain, that he could scarcely push on, and his clothes began to freeze to him, for he had soon got thoroughly wet through; he wandered about wildly, and did not know where he was going. He found a cave at nightfall and went into it, and spent the night, but it was a cold berth that he had there.

The whole moral atmosphere seems to have been troubled by such witch-storms as this, that Thorodd bought for the confusion of Björn. As soon as Arnkel was dead, all sorts of manifestations began to vex the inhabitants of the west coast. In the great day-room at Fródá the shut-up beds lined the inner portion, and against each of the side walls there were heaped up dried fish and meal. Opposite the beds was the fire, round which the inmates sat on the winter nights. Now there had been staying in the house a strange wandering woman, named Thorgunna, who had come from England with treasure of English embroideries, which she would not sell, but with which she decked her bed. When she felt herself dying, she sent for the master of the house, Thorodd, and made him swear that when he buried her, he would burn all her rich fabrics and bed-hangings. After that she died; and the next day Thorodd had all the hangings carried into the open air, and placed upon a pyre. His wife, Thurid, hurried out and asked him what he was doing, and whether he was not ashamed to spoil such rich things to please a dead woman's whim; and by-and-by she over-persuaded him to let her keep some of the embroideries. From that hour the curse was upon the household. In the evening, when the men who had buried Thorgunna were come home, and all the household were sitting round the fire, on the opposite wall, above the beds, they all saw a half-moon. Thorodd asked Thorir Woodenleg, who was a wizard, what that meant, and he answered that it was *urdarmáni*, a warlock moon, betokening approaching death to men. Urdr was the name of one of the Norns, and became a symbol of evil fate and a prognostic of disaster.

The first victim was the shepherd. He came home one night in a very dull and irritable mood, and from that time forth he moved about like a man bewitched. One evening he went to bed, and next morning was found dead, and was buried. Soon after that, says the Saga, there began great *reimleikr*, or ghostly play. Thorir Woodenleg went out one night, but when he came in again the dead shepherd caught him at the door, and threw him against it. They carried him to his bed, but his body turned black, and he died. After that the shepherd and Thorir Woodenleg haunted the place together, and frightened the house-carls to death one after another, till they had killed six of them. In the larder outside, the dried fish was packed up so tight that the larder-door would scarcely shut; yet it was tossed about as if it had been quite loose.

Digitized by Google

One night when Thorodd and five of his men had gone to get fish and were to be out all night, as those who remained at home sat round the fire, suddenly the round head of a seal came up through the floor. A woman happened to see it first, and she took a cudgel and struck it; but it slowly rose, and stared all the while at Thorgunna's embroidered hangings. Then a man went and struck it again; but at each blow it rose higher and stood on end until they could see its hind fin. Thorodd's son, Kjartan, was the only one who had any presence of mind; he took a great hammer and struck it on the head, and down it slowly went, like a peg driven into the floor, till at last the boards closed over it. Next morning, as Thorodd and his men came homewards from Ness, they were shipwrecked and drowned under the cliff of Enni, and their bodies were not found. Kjartan inherited his father's property, and he and his mother Thurid invited their neighbours to a banquet. Suddenly the dead father appeared among the guests, his clothes dripping with seawater. They took this for a good omen of the beneficence of Rán, the goddess of the sea. But Thorodd's ghost sat himself down by the fire, and would not go, so that it was a doleful banquet for the guests. After the neighbours had gone home, one evening Thorodd and his men, a troop of ghosts, all dripping wet, came in and sat down by the fire, wringing their clothes. Scarcely had they settled themselves there, when Thorir Woodenleg and his six companions came in, all covered with earth, for they had been buried. They rubbed themselves against the other ghosts and all clustered together round the fire, while all the living people in the house hurried away. Next evening the fire was lighted in another part of the house, but to no avail, for the ghosts found it out and sat there all the night. The third evening, Kjartan had two fires lighted, one in the great hall, and another in the kitchen, and the ghosts sat at the first, leaving the other for the living inmates. Meanwhile, there were dreadful rattlings among the dried fish all day and all night. Then the witch Thorgrimma fell sick and died; but the same evening that they buried her, she came in with Thorir and the other ghosts, and sat by the fire. So it went on, and by the end of February, out of thirty people who had formed the household, eighteen were dead and haunted the house, five had been driven away by terror, and only seven living persons remained.

Kjartan could stand it no longer, and one day he rode over to Helgafell to consult his wise uncle Snorri. It happened to be just at the time when Christianity was being introduced into Norway, and he found at Helgafell a priest whom Gizorr the White had sent to convert the household of Snorri. This priest Snorri sent on with Kjartan to Fródá to see if he could do anything to stop the ghosts from walking above ground. At the same time Snorri advised Kjartan to burn Thorgunna's bed-hangings. They reached Fródá on Candlemas Eve; in Kjartan's absence, his mother Thurid had been taken ill just in the same way as the others who had died. Kjartan went in, and there sat the dreadful silent company of eighteen ghosts, huddled round the fire. He

Digitized by Google

took down Thorgunna's bed-hangings, pushed through the ring of spectres, took a blazing coal, and went out into the yard, where he burned everything that belonged to Thorgunna. Then he came indoors, and the priest with him, and one by one they called aloud by name to the ghosts sitting round the fire, summoning them to a court of justice for entering the house uninvited, and for taking the lives of men. Thorir Woodenleg was condemned the first; then he rose and said: "I have sat here as long as I might." Then the shepherd was condemned, and he said: "Go I will, and I know it would have been seemly to go sooner." And Thorgríma said, as she went, "I have stayed here as long as I could." So one by one the ghosts all passed away, and each as he went said something of this kind. At last Thorir sat there alone, and when he was summoned and condemned, he said, "Little peace is here, I think, so let us all flit," and so he also went. Then the priest sprinkled the house with holy water, and held high mass before Thurid, who soon recovered. The whole family became Christian, Kjartan hired other house-folk, and they all lived happily at Fródá for many years.

But although the ghost stories in *Eyrbyggja* form its principal feature, they by no means exhaust its attractions. It is also the Saga of discovery, although the voyages to which it refers are mentioned in a cursory manner which is particularly tantalising. We should be glad to know more of the expedition made to Greenland by Erik the Red, and of the settlement of that country in 986. Erik the Red was outlawed for the murder of the sons of Thorgest at his house in Broad Bolstad. The case was tried by the Thing in the spring of the year 982, but as it proceeded Erik saw that it was sure to be decided against him, and without waiting for the close, he fitted out a ship in one of the little islets in the Hvammsfjord, and hid there till his enemies, who set off in pursuit of him, had passed the spot. He then sailed out into the unknown West, seeking adventures and new lands, until at last he came to a country that he called Greenland, and there he stayed three winters. He then returned to Iceland, stayed at home one year, and then set out again, with some families, to settle in Greenland. This happened fourteen years before the introduction of Christianity, and seems to have been made the subject of a long Saga of Erik the Red, which is now lost. After the quarrel between the men of Eyri and the men of Alptafjord, the sons of Thorbrand went out to join Erik in Greenland, and Thorleiff Kimbi settled in a bay between the glaciers which was called after him, Kimbuvág, but Snorri went on to Vinland, or Wineland, and fell there long afterwards fighting with the Skrælingjar, or Esquimaux, all which is described much more fully in *Thorfinns Saga Karlsefnis* than in the Saga before us.

Our *Eyrbyggja*, however, does give us one very interesting little episode of the early discoverers of America or Vinland. A man named Gudleif sailed from Iceland to Dublin, and, as he was returning, an east and north-east wind caught him on the west coast of Ireland, and drove

Digitized by Google

him far across the Atlantic in a south-westerly direction. At last, after a long voyage, they spied before them land, but evidently a country that they had never seen before. They determined to go ashore, and so they ran into a good harbour. The natives flocked down to the beach, but they could not understand the Icelanders; who, in return, thought their language, which sounded to them excessively odd, might possibly be a kind of Irish. Soon the natives mustered in several hundreds, and taking the Icelanders prisoners, they bound them together, and drove them up into the country. They were brought before a sort of council, and there was great discussion, of which they thought that they understood this much, that some of the Americans wished them to be slain, while others desired to make slaves of them. Suddenly a group of men came riding into the place, and they had a flag with them; in the midst of the group rode a noble-looking man, very aged, and with white hair. All the natives bowed at his coming, and received him as their master; he had Gudleif and his sailors brought before him, and he spoke to them in *Norræna*, or their own Norse tongue, asking them who they were. They answered that most of them were Icelanders. He asked from what part of Iceland they came, and they said from Borgarfjord; he then inquired exactly after all the chief men in Borgarfjord and Broadfjord, among others after Snorri and his sister Thurid, and the people at Fródá. He then left his seat, and took counsel with twelve of the natives; and, after a long discussion, he returned and said to Gudleif: "We have spoken together about your fate, and the natives have given you into my power, and I will now give you leave to go whither you will; and though it is now very late in the summer, I would counsel you to go quickly hence, for this folk is untrusty and difficult to reckon with, and they think that you have broken their laws." Gudleif said: "If we are so lucky as to get home safely, who shall we say is he who hath given us freedom?" And the tall old man replied: "That may I not tell you, for I do not desire that my friends and my foster-brethren should make such a journey hither as you would have made had I not come to your help. I shall not live long; and, even if I did live, there are stronger men than I in this land, although not in this neighbourhood, where you have come on shore." Then he helped them to get the ship ready for the voyage, and stayed with them till the wind was favourable for them to start. And before he parted from Gudleif, he gave him a sword, and said: "If you are so fortunate as to regain your fatherland, give this sword to Kjartan, the *bóndi* or master of Fródá, and give this ring to Thurid, his mother." Then Gudleif said, "And whom shall I say it was that sent these precious things?" The old man answered, "Say that he sent them who is a greater friend to the housewife at Fródá than to her brother at Helgafell." So with that, and after more assurances that it was useless for any one to come out to Vinland to visit him, they parted, and Gudleif sailed east over the sea and came back to Ireland in the autumn;

Digitized by Google

he wintered in Dublin, and next summer he sailed up to Iceland and delivered the gifts to Kjartan and Thurid. Every one supposed that this mysterious old man was Björn Breidvíkíngakappi, but no one ever knew exactly, or heard any more about him.

It is difficult to say whether the country on the west side of the Atlantic, of which so curious an account is here given, was Hvítramannaland, or White Man's Land, which has been identified with Georgia and Florida, or whether it was the veritable Vinland, discovered by Lief, son of Erik the Red, in 1001; the latter being almost undoubtedly New England about the neighbourhood of Cape Cod. Other tracts of the American continent were more or less fully explored by the Icelandic rovers. To the country on the other side of Baffin's Bay and Davis' Straits they gave the name of Helluland, or Slate Country; while by Markland, or Forest Country, they seem to have designated Labrador. From the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries the Icelandic colonists in Greenland seem to have flourished. As late as 1409 a duly nominated bishop officiated in the Cathedral of Gardar, a building the remains of which have been found, it is supposed, at Kaksiarsuk, a village above Julianeshaab, on the Igalliko Fjord. About 1418 the Greenland settlements disappear from history; it is believed that they were utterly exterminated by invading hordes of Esquimaux, and for a century and a half no one in Europe concerned himself about their existence. When at last, in 1578, Frederick II. of Denmark sent out an expedition to assist them, there were no traces to be found of them in any part of Greenland.

Our Saga closes rather hastily by referring its readers to other books for an account of the later life of Snorri. He continued to live at Helgafell for six years after the introduction of Christianity, and then he went over to a place called Tunga, where he lived for twenty years, and died in 1031, at the age of sixty-eight. As he grew older, he grew milder in temperament and made fewer enemies; his many daughters all married persons of distinction, and his son Halldor became illustrious for his intimate friendship through peace and war with King Harald Sigurdsson. From him descended the famous line of the Sturlas, to the most gifted of whom the editorship of the *Eyrbyggja Saga* has very plausibly been attributed.

E. W. G.

Digitized by Google

"The Cook's Oracle."

Sixty years ago the *Edinburgh Review* contained an article on Cookery, in which will be found a curious note concerning the author of the book whose title stands at the head of this page. "The singular coincidence of name and subject," says the reviewer, "led us at first to suppose that a culpable modesty had induced the author to assume the pseudonym of 'Kitchener'; but in this we were mistaken: we find that there is a real Dr. Kitchiner, and that he is devoted to the culinary art with a zeal almost unequalled. If report be true, the Doctor spends some hours each day in his laboratory, and has more than once worked his whole book through, in a course of experimental cookery." Thirty years later the *Quarterly*, in an article on Spectacles—a subject upon which the author of the *Cook's Oracle* had also written—says of Dr. Kitchiner that "the whole of his writings, medical, musical, optical, and culinary, show that he possessed the disposition of an elderly female—conspicuous among her sex for weak nerves, fidgety habits, and prim comforts. . . . Many who heard of him, through his best and really excellent treatise, *The Cook's Oracle*, always imagined that some careful housekeeper had assumed a name in accordance with her functions and in defiance of her sex, and chose to call herself Dr. Kitchiner, since Sterne had appropriated the more suitable title of Dr. Slop." The ignorance which is apparent in these extracts—the former of which, it will be noticed, was written in the lifetime of its subject—still appears to exist; and there are probably many persons now living who believe that the greatest of English dietetic reformers is known to the world by an assumed name. Dr. Kitchiner was, however, a very real personage in his time—a gourmand, a wit, a musician, and a man of science—and although the biographical dictionaries usually ignore him altogether, or at best sum up the facts relating to his life in half a dozen lines, he was really one of those men of strongly marked individuality of character whom the world ought not willingly to forget.

William Kitchiner was educated at Eton; but the author of *Lives of Celebrated Etonians* makes no mention of him, probably thinking that the *Cook's Oracle* had no claim to a place beside the authors of the *Scribleriad* and the *New Bath Guide*. His father is described by the *Gentleman's Magazine* as an "eminent" coal merchant, in Beaufort Buildings, Strand, who, by the diligent exercise of his trade, contrived to amass a considerable fortune. This being invested with care and prudence, rendered the son independent of his profession, which was perhaps as well, seeing that his degree in medicine was merely from

Digitized by Google

Glasgow, and did not permit of his practising in London. Accordingly he never attempted anything of the kind, but, taking a house in Warren Street, Fitzroy Square—then a neighbourhood of a much more respectable character than now—he settled down to the pursuits which his tastes inclined him to follow. His circumstances were somewhat peculiar; his character eccentric in no common degree; but underneath the extremest of his oddities there was a basis of good-sense and kindness which won for him the regard of a host of friends. His wife, it is true, quarrelled with him at an early period of their married life, and the result was that he remained a "married bachelor" for about twenty years. Left alone, he devoted himself to domestic economy and music; and being always something of a *bon vivant*, he assumed the personal direction of his kitchen. As a general rule, he is said to have been moderate and even abstemious in his personal habits; but he was careful always to provide an excellent table, and to superintend the preparation of his food in person. There may have been a reason for this in the fact that, for some unknown reason, he had an immoderate appetite. In one or other of his voluminous writings he confesses to an altogether extraordinary love of animal food, or rather to a craving which could not be repressed, and which was not easily gratified. This, in the words of an admirer, "had nothing to do with the love of eating, but was the result of some organic and incurable disease." At all events, we hear no such stories as those which are told of Dr. Johnson's appetite, and of that veal pie well stuffed with plums which, according to Lord Macaulay, was wont to produce such spasms of gluttony in the "great lexicographer." Dr. Kitchiner lived by system; he rose at a stated hour: spent a prearranged time over his toilette; descended to his breakfast-room punctually at half past eight; took luncheon at midday; dined at five; supped at half-past nine; and retired to rest at eleven. Breakfast was a solitary meal—light, but nourishing. Luncheon was a much more serious matter. A friend or two occasionally found admittance, and was treated with a repast which in the earlier days of this century he could hardly have found elsewhere. Savoury *pâtés*; potted meats of various kinds; fried and broiled fish; grills; cutlets and entrées of the most appetising description, together with sound wine and excellent coffee and liqueurs, made up the substantial midday repast. At five-o'clock dinner, arranged according to the peptic precepts of the *Cook's Oracle*, followed, leading up to the comfortable and cosy supper at half-past nine, which brought the gourmand's well-spent day to a close.

It must not be supposed that so much eating and drinking were exclusively selfish. The good Doctor delighted in hospitality, though he had some curious ways of displaying it. Thus, for example, when he gave a dinner-party the guests were invited for five o'clock, and at five minutes after that hour the street-door was locked, and the key, by his orders, laid upon the dinner-table. For several years a conversazione was held every Tuesday evening at his house, and, according to tra-

Digitized by Google

dition, on these occasions a placard was suspended over the chimney-piece, with the inscription, "Come at seven; go at eleven." It happened on one occasion that George Colman the younger was amongst the guests, and he, observing the placard, inserted the word "it" after "go," making the admonition read, "Come at seven; go it at eleven." Severer counsels generally prevailed, though it might have been supposed that the friendly supper at half-past nine would lead to occasional infractions of the rule of the house. It does not, however, appear that the Doctor allowed his habits to be disturbed by any of his friends, facetious or other. Music and conversation filled up the evening until the appointed time, and then some considerate guest was always found to say, with properly affected surprise, "'Tis on the strike of eleven!" "Hats, coats, cloaks, and umbrellas were then brought in; the Doctor attended his friends to the street door, looked up at the *stars*—if there were any visible—gave each of his friends a cordial shake of the hand, wished him a hearty good-night, and so the evening closed." That his friends were many need hardly be said. A man so hospitable could hardly fail to gather around him a goodly host of associates; and when to his hospitality was added his well-known love for art, literature, and music, it may be readily understood that the society in which he habitually lived was of the best. His personal qualities, apart from his pardonable eccentricities, were of the highest order. He was amiable in no common degree. One of his friends said, after his death, that he had never heard him say an ill-natured word of any one. He was much in request for the settlement of disputes, and to those who needed advice and assistance he was faithful and staunch. His eccentricities seem to have been, after all, eccentricities of manner only, though his will is said to have been exceedingly curious, and very disappointing to a large number of persons who had expected to profit by it. For the rest it is hardly for a generation whose affectations and sham æstheticisms have not been corrected even by such satirists as the authors of The *Monks of Thelema* and Messrs. Du Maurier and MacCarthy to be very severe on a gentleman whose principal offences seem to have been a liking for substantial good living and a habit of making indifferent jokes about his dinner. There is surely nothing very reprehensible in such an invitation as the following, which was handed about in the author's lifetime as a proof of his oddity:—

"Dear Sir,—The honour of your company is requested to dine with the Committee of Taste on Wednesday next, the 10th inst.

"The specimens will be placed upon the table at five o'clock precisely, when the business of the day will immediately commence.

"I have the honour to be your most obedient Savant,

"W. Kitchiner, Secretary.

"August 1825: 43 Warren Street, Fitzroy Square.

"At the last general meeting it was unanimously resolved that:—

"1st. An invitation to the Eta Beta Pi must be answered in writing as soon as possible after it is received, within twenty-four hours at latest reckoning from that on

Digitized by Google

which it is dated, otherwise the Secretary will have the profound regret to feel that the invitation has been definitely declined.

"2nd. The Secretary having represented that the perfection of several of the preparations is so exquisitely evanescent that the delay of one minute after their arrival at the meridian of concoction will render them no longer worthy of the attention of men of taste:

"Therefore, to insure the punctual attendance of those illustrious gastrophilists who on grand occasions are invited to join this high tribunal of taste for their own pleasure and the benefit of their country, it is irrevocably resolved, That the janitor be ordered not to admit any visitor, of whatever eminence of appetite, after the hour at which the Secretary shall have announced that the Specimens are ready.

"By order of the Committee,
"WILLIAM KITCHINER, Secretary."

The memorialist from whom this letter is quoted goes on to say in effect that the guest who received such an invitation would naturally find himself at the house of Dr. Kitchiner—host, cook, secretary to the Committee of Taste, and chief musician in ordinary—at a few minutes before five in the afternoon, where he would be received with musical honours. His worthy host would probably be found seated at the grand piano in pumps and silk stockings, thundering away at "See the conquering hero comes," with a due accompaniment of drums and triangles worked by the feet. Punctuality was strictly insisted upon—how strictly may be best known from the pages of the *Cook's Oracle*, which, it may be remarked by the way, is not a mere cookery-book, but a work which contains a vast quantity of shrewd and humorous observation, wit, and sound common-sense. The supercilious critics of the quarterly reviews might sneer as they pleased; the excellent Dr. Kitchiner, with all his weaknesses, will probably be remembered by a wider public than one composed of the readers of the somewhat mechanical essays in which he was satirised. Turning now to the *Oracle*, we find a long chapter devoted to the momentous subject of invitations to dinner. More than two closely printed octavo pages of this chapter are occupied with a dissertation illustrated by examples from ancient and modern literature of the important fact that "DINNER *is the only act of the day which cannot be put off with Impunity for even* FIVE MINUTES" (the peculiarities of typography are Dr. Kitchiner's). Then follow a host of instructions, including a recipe for "dinner pills," or, as the Doctor prefers to call them, "PERISTALTIC PERSUADERS," and a number of instructions to butler, host, and cook. The first is told that he must be sure that "the Cloth be laid in the Parlour and all the paraphernalia of the dinner table arranged at least half an hour before dinner-time." The host in turn is to introduce his guests to each other in the interval before dinner, "naming them individually in an audible voice, and adroitly laying hold of those ties of acquaintanceship or profession which may exist between them." The guests are admonished if they have any respect for their host or prefer a well-dressed dinner to one that is spoiled, "instead of coming half an hour after, to take care to make their appear-

Digitized by Google

ance a quarter of an hour before the time appointed." A couple of pages more on the benefits of punctuality follow, and then the good Doctor descants upon the custom of grace—not, it may be observed, for the first or only time in the course of his voluminous oracles.

On this subject the "Gentle Elia" has also discoursed in one of the subtlest and most playful of his essays, the point of which, delicately touched and played with, seems to be that grace before meat is a species of impertinence. Dr. Kitchiner seems to be pretty much of Charles Lamb's opinion. When the appointed hour strikes, he urges his gastrophilic readers to "say grace and begin the business of the day." Nor does he desire to listen to long and elaborate musical performances. "That the intricate Old Canon of *Non nobis* should still continue to exclude all other Graces has excited my astonishment," says he, "ever since I first heard it some Thirty years ago, when, thought I, can anything be more barbarous than to sing in a Foreign Tongue, of which not one in Ten of those who sing and not One in a Hundred of those who hear, understand One Word in Ten of? Moreover, to complete this extreme Absurdity, the composer has contributed his utmost to involve these *Latin* words in the most elaborate obscurity, by setting them in the form of a *fugue*, which (however pretty it may seem to the eye and ear of a subtle contrapuntist), as *each singer pronounces a different word*, the Sense is thereby as confused as Sounds are in a Dutch Concert, where each man Sings a different Song! However, this composition is considered such an indispensable part of the ceremonial of Public Dinners that it has been calculated that the good people of Great Britain do not pay less than TEN THOUSAND POUNDS A YEAR for the performance of it!"

This dreadful state of things not merely arouses the wrath of the "Cook's Oracle," but induces him to present a musical grace of his own, which may certainly boast the merit of brevity, even though it be not quite so short as the famous "grace after meat" of the collier, which, as will probably be remembered, consisted in wiping the mouth upon the wrist, and the ejaculation of the word "Theer." Between this perfunctory phrase and the too elaborate *Non nobis*, Dr. Kitchiner's grace holds a happy medium, consisting, as it does, in the simple words "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," set to music. As about fifteen seconds only need be consumed in this devout expression, it is possible that some guests at public banquets may even now wish to see Dr. Kitchiner's modest grace brought into more general use. To the hungry diner-out it is no small trial of patience to be kept whilst a reverend gentleman in full canonicals intones a grace modelled on the Bidding Prayer before a University Sermon. Supplementing these remarks of the venerable Doctor come some hints to carvers, interesting chiefly as pointing, in the first place, to the ungainly custom of our ancestors of introducing soup and fish as one course, with entrées, roast, and game as a remove, and in the second as proving that the "Cook's

Digitized by Google

Oracle" was in advance of his time, and was prepared to see the entire abolition of the tiresome custom of carving at table. A prevision of the sweet simplicity of the *dîner à la Russe* could hardly be expected in 1816, but something of the sort was evidently present to the mind of our Oracle when he wrote: "It would save a great deal of time, &c., if poultry, especially large turkeys and geese, were sent to table ready cut up; fish that is fried should be previously divided into such portions as are fit to help at table."

Before proceeding to the dinner, however, Dr. Kitchiner gives his readers, both cooks and their masters, a little good advice. Masters, for example, he recommends to treat their servants with consideration, and he enters into an elaborate calculation to show that the absolutely necessary expenditure of a maid-servant (in which the Oracle includes tea and sugar) is at the least 9*l.* 8*s.* per annum; and that, in consequence, it is the duty of employers to pay higher wages and to treat their servants with greater generosity generally than they were wont to do some sixty years ago. For their part servants are treated with much good advice, some of which reads rather curiously, though most of it is marked by the soundest common-sense. Thus, for example, after somewhat elaborately describing the physiological phenomena of taste, the "Cook's Oracle" cautions his disciples against wearing out the palate by overmuch tasting. "A sagacious Cook, instead of idly and wantonly wasting the excitability of her palate, on the sensibility of which her reputation and fortune depend, when she has ascertained the relative strength of the flavour of the various ingredients she employs, will call in the Balance and the Measure to do the ordinary business, and endeavour to preserve her Organ of Taste with the utmost care, that it may be a faithful oracle to refer to on grand occasions and new compositions." The notion of defining quantities in cookery by weight and measure, instead of going upon the old "rule of thumb—a pinch of this, a handful of that, a spoonful of t'other," Dr. Kitchiner claims as his exclusive property, and in one place he is judiciously severe upon an ignorant pretender who appropriated the idea, and published a cookery-book based upon it ten years after the appearance of the first edition of the *Cook's Oracle*. It is not a little amusing in this connection to reflect that Gouffé, whose magnificent book upon cookery appeared in 1865, puts forward precisely the same pretension. Dr. Kitchiner has, however, on most occasions what the Scotch preacher called "a gude conceit o' hissel'," and not unfrequently a very odd way of expressing it. Thus at the beginning of his Introduction he says of his book that it is "not a mere marrowless collection of shreds and patches and cuttings and pastings, but a *bonâ fide* register of Practical Facts, accumulated by a perseverance not to be subdued or evaporated by the igniferous terrors of a Roasting Fire in the Dog Days—in defiance of the Odoriferous and Calefacient repellents of *Roasting*, *Boiling*, *Frying*, and *Broiling*;—moreover the Author has submitted to a labour no preceding Cookery

Digitized by Google

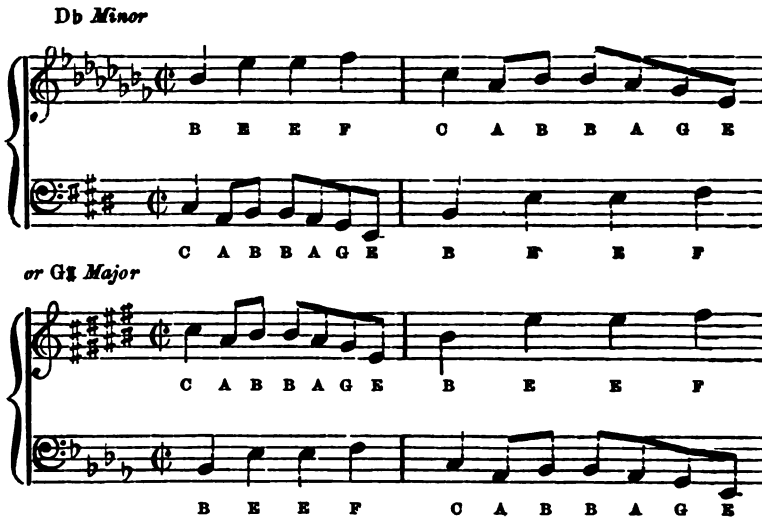
Book maker, perhaps, ever attempted to encounter, having *eaten* each receipt before he set it down in his book." The grammar of this wonderful sentence may perhaps be open to correction, but the "Odoriferous and Calefacient repellents" of cookery and "the igniferous terrors of a Roasting Fire in the Dog Days" are worthy of the inventor of the "Frappant and Tintinnabulant appendages" to Drury Lane stage door in the *Rejected Addresses*. His boast of having "eaten his receipts" may perhaps be left to take care of itself.

It may be worth while to consult the "Oracle" and to note what the hierophant has to say concerning a few of what he calls the "concomitants" of an English dinner. Oysters, of course, begin the meal. "Delicate little creatures!" ejaculates Dr. Kitchiner, "they are as exquisite in their own taste as in that of others." His observations on the eating of oysters are eminently characteristic. "Common people," he tells us, "are indifferent about the *manner of opening Oysters*, and the time of eating them after they are opened. Nothing, however, is more important in the enlightened eyes of the experienced Oyster-eater. Those who wish to enjoy this delicious restorative in its utmost perfection must eat it the moment it is opened, with its own Gravy in the under-shell; if not *Eaten while Absolutely Alive* its flavour and spirit are lost. The true lover of an Oyster will have some regard for the feelings of his little favourite, and will never abandon it to the mercy of a bungling operator, but will open it himself, and contrive to detach the fish from the shell so dexterously that the Oyster is hardly conscious he has been ejected from his Lodging till he feels the teeth of the piscivorous *Gourmand* tickling him to death." This is almost as attractive a picture as that of Piscator in the *Complete Angler* impaling the worm upon the hook "as if he loved him." The chapters on soup afford one or two curious notes. Amongst the recipes, for example, is one for "Mock Mock Turtle," which appears to be the invention of "Elizabeth Lister (late Cook to Dr. Kitchiner), Bread and Biscuit Baker, No. 6 Salcombe Place, York Terrace, Regent's Park—Goes out to dress dinners on reasonable terms." Concerning mock turtle we are informed that it "is the *Bonne Bouche* which the 'officers of the Mouth' of Old England prepare when they choose to rival '*les Grands Cuisiniers de* (*sic*) *France*' in a *Ragoût sans Pareil*." The directions for making this soup fill altogether about four pages, and embedded amongst them comes the following outburst in praise of the dish (the italics and the capitals are the Doctor's): "Without its paraphernalia of subtle double Relishes a *STARVED TURTLE* has *not more* intrinsic sapidity than a FATTED CALF. Friendly Reader, it is really neither half so wholesome nor half so toothsome." Later on he says: "This is a delicious Soup within the range of those 'who eat to live'; but if had been composed expressly for those who only 'live to eat,' I do not know how it could have been made more agreeable: as it is, the lover of good eating 'will wish his throat a mile long, and every inch of it palate.'"

Digitized by Google

Concerning fish, the only really noticeable direction is a piece of advice to the cook not to allow turbot and some other fish to be sent to the table too fresh. It is not until we get amongst the *entrées*—or, as Dr. Kitchiner prefers to call them, the "Made Dishes"—that anything really characteristic is found. The first noticeable point is that the majority of these "Made Dishes" are hashes. The exception is a recipe for cooking "Shin of Beef," for which dish the Oracle claims the attention of the "Rational Epicure," on the ground of its being "one of those in which 'Frugality,' 'Nourishment,' and 'Palatableness' are most happily combined—and you get half a Gallon of excellent BROTH into the Bargain." As a pendant to this whimsical recipe we have one for "*Bubble and Squeak*" *or Fried Beef or Mutton and Cabbage* (No. 505):—

When, 'midst the Frying-Pan in accents Savage,
The Beef, so surly, quarrels with the Cabbage.



Dr. Kitchiner is perhaps the first "Cook's Oracle" who has set his instructions to music, and considering the eccentricities of his musical grammar, it may be hoped that he will be the last. It is, of course, impossible now to say whether the author of *Pendennis* had Dr. Kitchiner in his mind when he hit upon the exquisitely ludicrous character of Mirobolant—that wonderful French cook in Sir Francis Clavering's household, who was wont to seek for inspiration when composing his *menus* in the performance of solemn music on the piano—but the coincidence is certainly curious. In connection with this combination of music and cookery, Dr. Kitchiner tells a curious anecdote in—of all places in the world—the queer rambling treatise in two volumes which he called the *Economy of the Eyes*. Mr. Cooke of Drury Lane Theatre, a singer and composer whom Dr. Kitchiner styles "the most

Digitized by Google

extraordinary musician of the present age," possessed the faculty of naming every semitone, without a mistake, if a handful of the keys of a harpsichord were put down "so as to produce the most irrelative combinations." On one occasion the Doctor played the above remarkable composition over to him, whereupon he "told me at once—'I think, sir, that you have *beef* in one hand and *cabbage* in the other.'"

It should, however, be noted that music is one of the subjects upon which the "Cook's Oracle" is most diffuse, and on which he unquestionably spent a good deal of time and labour. Amongst his many publications is a tiny duodecimo, published in 1821, and not apparently reprinted, which has for title "Observations on Vocal Music." The principal object of this little essay is the enforcement of an idea, the germ of which is to be found in the eighteenth *Spectator*. Addison, whom no one would accuse of being a musician, there expatiates on the desirabiliy of wedding the music to the words with greater propriety than was then usual. "I remember," he says, "an Italian verse that ran thus, word for word: 'And turned my rage into pity,' which the English for rhyme sake translated 'And into pity turned my rage.' By this means the soft notes that were adapted to pity in the Italian fell upon the word rage in the English; and the angry sounds that were turned to rage in the original were made to express pity in the translation. It oftentimes happened, likewise, that the finest notes in the air fell upon the most insignificant words in the sentence. I have known the word 'and' pursued through a whole gamut; have been entertained with many a melodious 'the,' and have heard the most beautiful graces, quavers, and divisions bestowed upon 'then,' 'for,' and 'from,' to the eternal honour of our English particles." Dr. Kitchiner does not refer to the earlier writer, but the principle of his little book is certainly to be found in these words. Music is in his eyes a vehicle for the conveyance of ideas, and the eighty-one pages of this book are given to expounding, in a variety of ways, and with abundant illustrations, the theory that "the Art of Singing effectively is to Sing every word with the same Accent and Emphasis as you would Speak it," a theory which he contends has been unduly neglected by some of the greatest musicians, who have failed to make the musical accent correspond with the spoken. "'He *shall* feed his flock' and 'He *was* despised' are examples of equally false emphasis. 'Fair*est* Isle' is one of Purcell's extraordinary mistakes."

This affection for music displays itself in the most unexpected places. Amongst the works of Dr. Kitchiner is a *Traveller's Oracle*, in two parts. The first contains estimates of the expenses of travelling on foot, on horseback, in stages, in post-chaises, and in private carriages, together with "precepts for promoting the pleasures, and hints for preserving the health of travellers." The second part comprises "The Horse and Carriage-keeper's Oracle, rules for purchasing, keeping, and jobbing horses and carriages, estimates of expenses occasioned thereby, and an easy plan for ascertaining every hackney coach fare. The book

Digitized by Google

itself is not especially remarkable for anything except for having furnished the celebrated sporting writer "Nimrod" with a text for his well-known article on "The Road" in the *Quarterly* of 1832. It may be noted, by the way, that the only allusion to the text in this article is a slight sneer at "the late happily named Dr. Kitchener" (*sic*), whom "Nimrod" describes as *Epicuri de grege porcus*. It might be thought that music was about the last thing to look for in such a book as this, but Dr. Kitchiner is not to be prevented from bringing in his favourite topic by any fantastic notions of congruity. He introduces no fewer than eight musical compositions into the book; the title of which, by the way, affords but the faintest idea of its heterogeneous contents. The first comes after a dissertation on the Christian duty of observing the Sabbath, and is called "A Father's Advice to his Son." The "Cook's Oracle" is responsible for both words and music in this as in most of the pieces contained in this book. The hymn runs—

Be humble, patient, trust in God,
Believe what is, is best;
Walk in the path your *Saviour* trod,
Your days will then be blest.

It is only fair to say that the music is considerably better than the words. In another place, *à propos* to a piece of advice to his readers concerning abstinence from religious discussions with strangers, he presents them with "An Universal Prayer," to which the same remark will apply. By way of a change from the severity of these devout exercises, we are treated, in the course of a particularly stupid story, to settings of "Fill the Goblet again," and of Herrick's "Gather your rosebuds while you may," while the return of the traveller to his native country is celebrated in a patriotic song, "All hail, Britannia! Queen of Isles!" Next to religion, on which the "Cook's Oracle" appears to have felt very strongly, though it appears to have exercised little influence on his domestic relations, patriotism is, indeed, one of the principal features in his character. Thus the song just mentioned is ushered in with the following portentous sentence: "When he (the Traveller) considers the arbitrary and tyrannic governments, the slavery and poverty of the lower class of people, the pride and ignorance of the opulent, and the superstition and bigotry of both, and compares them with the advantages which so eminently distinguish his own country, where the climate is temperate, the earth fruitful, the government mild, the inhabitants of both sexes intelligent, and the women remarkably beautiful, he will then rest contented with the happiness he enjoys by having it in his power to spend the remainder of his days in HAPPY ENGLAND, and sing with heart and voice 'All hail,' &c." Another illustration of this patriotic temper will be found embedded in a collection of amatory and anacreontic songs by this same composer. The sixth number is a "Grand March composed for and dedicated to the Volunteers of St. Clement Danes," bearing date 1803, the year of the breaking out of the French war. This is followed by two

Digitized by Google

"British War-songs" similarly dedicated. There is a fine Philistine contempt for foreigners about Dr. Kitchiner's words at which it is difficult not to smile, in spite of the indubitable patriotism and spirit of the lines.

Britain's great and warlike host
  Scorn the puny threats of slaves;
Ere the cowards reach your coast
  They shall find their wat'ry graves.

Atheist Gallia bends her knee
  At a base usurper's nod:
Britons, ever bold and free,
  Love their king—adore their God.

Gallia's gaunt and rabble rout,
  Famine leads to lawless spoil:
Britons' courage, ever stout,
  Centers in their native soil.

Gallia skulks within her ports—
  Gallia great in threats alone:
Britain every danger courts,
  Bravely rallies round the throne.

Amongst the miscellaneous works of Dr. Kitchiner was a *Housekeeper's Oracle*—a companion to the *Cook's Oracle*—which is not un amusing reading, inasmuch as it is full of quaint common-sense, and affords, besides, an interesting picture of social life in the middle-class half a century ago. Amongst the maxims which the Oracle impresses on the young housekeeper is one enforcing the prudence of "dealing with tradesmen of fair character and established circumstances." Another concerns the wisdom of "submitting cheerfully to be imposed on in due proportion to your circumstances. He who will not be cheated *a little*," adds the Doctor, "must be content to be abused a *great deal*, to be at constant variance with his servants, tradesmen, and with every one dependent on him"—maxims which will hardly be acceptable to the customers of the Civil Service Stores. On dinners and dinner-giving Dr. Kitchiner has a chapter or two full of that sound practical wisdom which distinguishes the essays of the late Mr. Thackeray on the same subjects, the keynote being—"However plain your dinner, if it is prime, plentiful, and properly dressed, it will be as acceptable to friends to whom *you* are acceptable as a profusion of all the expensive Rarities which extravagance could have assembled." It is, however, as a picture of manners that the *Housekeeper's Oracle* is most interesting. Thus, for example, the author dilates at length on the utter folly of those "children of a larger growth" who give dinners at seven or eight o'clock—a subject which excites him to almost as great wrath as "your silly, infecting farrago of *Made Dishes* and preparations, which are provided to pamper satiated Appetite and to feed the eyes of superannuated Epicures, that overcome the Stomach and paralyse the Digestion of those who eat them, and empty the Pockets of those who provide them."

Digitized by Google

Another of these works has a title-page of prodigious length, and is devoted to "The Art of Invigorating and Prolonging Life." It is dedicated to the nervous and bilious, and contains essays on Training, Reducing Corpulence, on Sleep, Siesta, Clothes, Fire, Air, Exercise, and Wine. A little pamphlet is also appended, called "Peptic Precepts," and the whole concludes with an "Essay on the Pleasure of Making a Will." The leading idea of the book—which is addressed, not to the medical profession, but to hypochondriacs and invalids—is common-sense. Thus, when the Doctor is discoursing of sleep, he does not advise his readers to make themselves miserable by getting up at unearthly hours, or to attempt to do without a sufficient amount of natural rest. As for wine, the patient is recommended to drink it if he likes, but to refrain from taking bad or common wine, and from spoiling what he drinks by icing it; but, adds the Doctor, "our VINUM BRITANNICUM—good home-brewed Beer—which has been very deservedly called Liquid Bread, is preferable to any other beverage during dinner or supper." In the matter of medicine, Dr. Kitchiner was decidedly in advance of his age. His prescriptions—and this little volume contains a good many of them—are the mildest and gentlest that can be imagined, and the advice of the author is to take as little of them as possible. Curiously enough, however, although the "Cook's Oracle" lived by rule, he appears never to have been a thoroughly healthy man; and, although he laid down excellent principles for invigorating and prolonging life, he died in his fiftieth year. He devoted twenty pages of this book to "The Pleasure of Making a Will," which act he described as the art of dying honourably. All that he says is excellent sense; but his precepts and his practice appear to have been strangely at variance. According to a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "the Doctor's Will, made about sixteen years since, is as remarkable for its eccentricity as any of the productions of the testator, and it is said that another, making some serious alterations in the disposal of his property, was intended for signature on the Wednesday following the night on which he died." One of his own precepts, however, his will fully carried out. He is particularly careful to impress upon his readers the duty of remembering "the claims of him who, as the law expresses it, has no kindred—who is *nullius filius*—who has no protector but his reputed parent." Dr. Kitchiner had such a son, whom he educated at Cambridge, and to whom he bequeathed the bulk of his property.

F. H.

Digitized by Google

Cabinet-Making.

PARADOXICAL as it may seem, the chief difficulty of Cabinet-making consists in the fact that half the work is done before you undertake it. The Premier knows too well that some persons must be in; and have even a right to certain offices. One or two chiefs of the party have virtually their choice of portfolios. Then the Premier is tied down by a number of precedents, some of which he can indeed break through, but at the risk of offending those followers who would have profited by them—to say nothing of raising constitutional questions in Parliament and the Press. Then there must be a fair division of seats between the members of the two Houses; at all events the Commons must have a full moiety of places. The Peers may now-a-days be treated with less consideration —a century ago the case was exactly reversed. When Mr. Pitt formed his first administration in 1783, it consisted of six peers and one commoner—himself. He had thus no colleague, properly speaking, on the Treasury Bench. Dundas, Treasurer of the Navy, was his principal lieutenant; being nearly twice the age of his chief, and having been in office before Pitt took his degree at Cambridge. The Cabinet was gradually enlarged, but Pitt was by no means solicitous to add to the number of members of the Lower House with places in it. Dundas got a seat in '91; so did William Grenville, who, however, was at the same time created a peer.

That Pitt should undertake a Herculean task was not surprising; but one marvels to think Addington should equally have resolved to be sole Minister in the House of Commons. In 1804, Pitt, having failed in the attempt to form a coalition Cabinet, constructed a purely Tory one, with but a single member of the Lower House in it besides himself. With the advent of the Whigs to power in 1806 there came a change which marks the beginning of a new era. The First Lord of the Treasury was a peer; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Foreign and Colonial Secretaries, and the First Lord of the Admiralty were all commoners.

The Tory Ministries which succeeded between 1807 and 1830 made no attempt to reverse the new precedent; and it was Mr. Canning (credited with having invented the name "Conservative") who first enunciated the proposition that the First Minister of the Crown should always be a member of the House of Commons.

Canning's endeavours to form an administration in 1827 illustrate some of the difficulties of the task. He wrote to Wellington to ask him if he would join the new Cabinet. The Duke replied by one of the few

Digitized by Google

impertinences of which his Grace was ever guilty: "Who was to be the head of the in-coming Government?" Canning, of course, answered with some asperity that he was himself to be its head; and the negotiations were at an end.

Canning's list of the Ministry comprised himself as First Minister, with the post of Foreign Secretary; but he was assured that the Premier must take the Treasury or he would upset all existing arrangements. It never seems to have occurred to him to constitute himself at once First Lord of the Treasury and Foreign Secretary; though there seems no reason why the chief of a Ministry should not hold both those offices, even as Mr. Gladstone holds (and many of his predecessors have held before him) the double posts of President of the Cabinet and Finance Minister. The First Lord of the Treasury has, as such, nothing to do with financial affairs, except in so far as he controls every department of the Administration.

Spencer Perceval combined three offices in his own person, viz. those of First Lord of the Treasury, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The First Lord, by the way, receives 5,000*l.* a year; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer the same. If, however, the First Lord is also Chancellor, he receives 7,500*l.* per annum.

The only other double tenure of office by a Premier which has to be noted is Lord Beaconsfield's acceptance of the Privy Seal in 1876. He declined to take any additional salary, and gained nothing by the honour except the privilege of walking out of a room before dukes who happened to enjoy no more exalted office. The Privy Seal, being a peer, ranks immediately after the Lord President, that is, before even the Premier Duke and Earl Marshal.

Canning's dictum as to the natural place of the Prime Minister hardly commended itself to the Whigs, or Liberals as they began to be called. Lord Grey was a peer, so was Lord Melbourne who succeeded him; Lord John Russell was a commoner during his first Premiership, but a peer during his second. The semi-Liberal, if not wholly Liberal, Lord Aberdeen was a peer. In 1859 many Liberals wanted to make Lord Granville First Minister; in 1867, when it was thought the Tory Ministry might resign, Lord Halifax was much spoken of as possible First Lord of the Treasury. And there can be little doubt that a peer, or the heir to a peerage, will be the next Liberal Premier.

Of the great posts for which a new Premier finds already designated occupants, the woolsack naturally first suggests itself. If there be an ex-Chancellor of the party in the possession of his faculties, he returns to his old post, and this for several reasons. For one, the Chancellor must, in the nature of things, be an able man, both a good lawyer and a practical politician; and as such not easily to be spared. Again, the Chancellor must be a peer, and it is obviously inexpedient to add to the number of the Lords. So that if an ex-Keeper of the Great Seal is both willing and able to serve again, he is generally welcome to do so. The

Digitized by Google

single exception of recent years occurred in 1868, when Mr. Disraeli succeeded the late Lord Derby in the Premiership, and at the same time dismissed the late Lord Chelmsford from the office of Chancellor. It is to be noted however that Lord Cairns, appointed to the vacant post, was already a peer.

Should there be no ex-Chancellor of the party available, the choice virtually lies between the Attorney-General and one of the Presidents of the Law-Courts. In 1859, Lord Campbell, Chief Justice of England, was named Chancellor; and was succeeded at his death (in 1861) by Sir Richard Bethell, created Lord Westbury. Lord Westbury was compelled to resign by a vote of the House of Commons in 1865, when he was replaced by Lord Cranworth, who, though an ex-Liberal Chancellor, was not re-offered the post in '59, partly because he had never been more than half a Liberal (having first sat on the Woolsack as a member of the Peelite Cabinet), and partly because Lord Campbell had very strong claims on his party, which, in fact, owed him some atonement for their past treatment of him.

On their return to power in '66, the Tories re-appointed Lord Chelmsford (the Chancellor of 1858–9). On Mr. Gladstone's becoming Premier, at the close of '68, he offered the Great Seal to Sir Roundell Palmer, who had been Attorney-General in the late Liberal Administration, but that gentleman declined the post as being opposed to the disendowment (he had no objection to the disestablishment) of the Irish Church. The great prize of the legal profession was accordingly bestowed on Lord Justice Page Wood, but Sir Roundell's prior claim was not forgotten, and he became Chancellor on Lord Hatherley's retirement.

Of the minor legal posts it may be observed that the Solicitor-General's claim to succeed the Attorney-General is rarely contested. In December '68, Mr. (now Lord) Coleridge, declined at first to serve under Sir Robert Collier, who had been named Attorney-General, on account of Sir R. Palmer's temporary secession from the Liberal ranks. It was whispered that Mr. Coleridge had expected to be made Chancellor *per saltum*; for which course there would have been two precedents, though somewhat remote ones in our rapidly moving age. Erskine, in 1806, and Brougham in 1830, were raised to the Woolsack without having previously served in any intermediate office. However, Mr. Coleridge was induced to waive his high pretensions. It should be added that, though an Attorney-General is frequently made Chancellor, the traditions of Westminster Hall allow him no more than a claim to the Chief-Justiceship of the Common Pleas, as of right.

Lawyers, who are more powerful in England than in any other country (America perhaps excepted), have never been easy to deal with by statesmen forming administrations. Lord Grey had scarcely offered the Great Seal to Brougham before he found himself on the verge of collision with the latter. The Premier wrote to say that he meant to make Lyndhurst (the ex-Chancellor) Chief Baron of the Exchequer.

Digitized by Google

Brougham assented, but took care to inform Grey at the same time, that the appointment properly lay with the Chancellor.

Chancellor Thurlow even claimed to be entitled to advise the sovereign as to the bestowal of peerages. Pitt's comment on the claim was to get rid of Thurlow at the earliest possible opportunity; and no later Chancellors have been so bold.

Another rule of Cabinet-making which has begun to hamper Premiers is this. It is thought expedient that the chiefs of the two great spending departments, viz., the War Office and the Admiralty, should be in the House which votes the Supplies. The rule seems a fair enough one in theory: though in the United States neither the Secretary of War, nor the Secretary of the Navy, nor any other Cabinet Minister is a member of Congress. And it has been reserved for Mr. Gladstone to break through this new clause of our unwritten constitution by naming Lord Northbrook First Lord of the Admiralty. Between the resignation of the Duke of Somerset in '66 and the appointment of Lord Northbrook in 1880 there were six First Lords, all Commoners, four being Conservatives. Lord Beaconsfield has been studious to maintain the quasi-privilege of the Lower House in this respect. The Whig Lord Russell and the Radical Mr. Gladstone felt themselves entitled to act with greater freedom.

A Secretary of State for War (quite a different personage from the "Secretary-at-War") was first created in 1794; and the business of the Colonies, which had hitherto been transacted by the Home Department, was soon after transferred to the War Office. In 1854 the Colonial and War Departments were separated. The "Secretaries of State for War" (pure and simple, as the French would say) from that date have been:—The Duke of Newcastle, Lord Panmure, Colonel (afterwards General) Peel, Sidney Herbert, Sir George Cornewall Lewis, Earl de Grey, the Marquis of Hartington, General Peel again, Sir John Pakington, Mr. Cardwell, Mr. Gathorne Hardy, Colonel Stanley, Mr. Childers. It will be seen that the last seven names in succession are those of commoners.

Neither the War Office nor the Admiralty is, however, a place of the first rank in the Cabinet. The Secretary of State, though his name is now jealously placed before that of Commander-in-Chief in the Army List, is yet somewhat dependent on that functionary, especially when the latter happens to be a Royal Duke. The First Lord of the Admiralty is theoretically but the chairman of a committee; and can do little without the consent of the "Sea Lords." If he happens to be himself a sailor, the case is different; but then he hardly ever is. Algernon, Duke of Northumberland, who held the office in Lord Derby's cabinet of 1852, was the last head of the Admiralty who had been a sailor. There have been but three others in the century; the Duke of Clarence, "Lord High Admiral in Council," in 1827–8; Charles, Lord Barham, an admiral of some fame, who had the glory of sending Nelson to his last victory (1805–6); and Earl St. Vincent (1801–4). The generation which

Digitized by Google

has laughed at the *Pinafore* may be reminded that civilians have made just as good First Lords as sailors. At all events a landsman was at the head of the Navy from December 1794 to February 1801—a period marked by three glorious victories won by three different commanders against fearful odds. No other First Lord has been able to boast of an administration distinguished by three such days as those of St. Vincent, Camperdown, and the Nile. Lord Spencer's predecessor had been John, Earl of Chatham, an indifferent soldier. Under his rule was achieved the memorable triumph of the First of June. Lord Spencer's successor was the hero of St. Vincent afore-mentioned. He in no way distinguished himself as First Lord, except by declining to grant a medal for the battle of Copenhagen. Jealousy of Nelson was the suspected motive of the refusal.

Some other portfolios are still considered the peculiar property of Peers, notably those of President of the Council and Lord Privy Seal. Still there is nothing in the law or the Constitution to prevent either office being held by a commoner; and the former was filled for some months by Lord John Russell, long before his elevation to the Peerage. The Lord President is, next to the Chancellor, the first lay subject in the realm; the Lord Privy Seal ranking immediately after him. The relative importance of the posts has considerably changed. Under the Stuarts, and even later, the Lord Privy Seal was virtually the confidential Minister of the Crown, *par excellence;* and the great Marquis of Halifax, as Privy Seal to William III., was considered First Minister. Formal precedence belonged already to the Lord President, but he was then simply a stately official endued with a large salary. Now the Lord President discharges the double functions of Minister of Education and Minister of Agriculture; and his duties become more onerous year by year. The Lord Privy Seal has nothing left him to do; and the post is now assigned either to an aged politician who is unfitted for hard work but still competent to advise, or to a young one, not yet entitled to the headship of a department, but who is ready to do all the miscellaneous work of the Administration, e.g. bring in Bills which other Ministers are too busy to attend to. The Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster is bestowed out of precisely the same considerations. The said Chancellor's work is chiefly legal, and performed by a Vice-Chancellor. The Chancellor of the Duchy receives 2,000*l.* a year; and enjoys a considerable amount of Church patronage. Mr. Bright is the first Dissenter who has held the office. Lord Dufferin, who occupied it before him, described it as the post of maid-of-all-work in the Cabinet.

Apropos of salaries, the Lord President and Lord Privy Seal each receive 2,000*l.* a year; the Lord Chancellor 10,000*l.*, with a retiring pension of 5,000*l.*, even if he should have been only a day in office. Each Secretary of State receives 5,000*l.*; the First Lord of the Admiralty, 4,500*l.*; the Postmaster-General 2,500*l.*; the Presidents of the Board of Trade and Local Government Board, each 2,000*l.*; the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, between 4,000*l.* and 5,000*l.* The Lord-

Digitized by Google

Lieutenant himself has 20,000*l.* a year (besides allowances), and a residence,' but has to spend every farthing of it. Some Viceroys of Ireland in late years are said to have paid yearly as much out of their private means as they received from the Treasury.

A Cabinet Minister is not, as such, entitled to a pension on retiring. But there are four pensions, each of 2,000*l.* a year, at the disposal of that exalted class of statesmen, if they have held Cabinet office for two (not necessarily continuous) years. But before accepting such a pension the ex-Minister must make a formal declaration that he cannot keep up the state and dignity of his social position without it. If he returns to office, his pension does not cease, but remains, so to say, in abeyance; not being paid till he is out again. The four holders of Cabinet pensions at this moment are Lord Beaconsfield, Sir George Grey, Mr. Milner Gibson, and Mr. Spencer Walpole; two Conservatives and two Liberals.

Of the Secretaries of State, the Foreign is generally in the House of Lords; the Home in the Commons. Both offices date from 1782, when the old division of Secretaries for the "Northern" and "Southern" departments was abolished. The first Foreign Secretary was Fox; and only one in the list—Canning—is not a peer or the son of a peer. There is no rule which prescribes that the Minister for Foreign Affairs should be a member of the Upper House; but it is usual to select a person of "noble" birth for the office, as foreign powers (notably the Republic of the United States) prefer to deal with *grands seigneurs*. Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, and Lord Derby all held the seals of Foreign Secretary while members of the House of Commons; but then they were representatives of the oldest patrician houses in the country. The Home Secretary has been continuously in the House of Commons since 1841; the last peer who held the office was the first Marquis of Normanby of the present creation (1839–41). This was in the Whig Ministry presided over by Lord Melbourne. The work of this Secretary is enormous; and it is considered advisable that he should have some knowledge of law in addition to the ordinary accomplishments required of a Minister. Since 1846 only barristers have been appointed to the Home Office. Sir Richard Cross is the author of a weighty treatise on the practice of Quarter Sessions. Sir William Harcourt is one of the first living authorities on international law. It must be remembered that the Lord Chancellor and the Home Secretary divide between them the duties which in most other countries are assigned to a single official, bearing the style of "Minister of Justice." It is on the Home Secretary that rests one of the most solemn of all responsibilities, that of advising the Queen as to whether a sentence of death passed by a court of justice on one of her subjects shall be carried out. The constitutional practice is, curiously enough, to take the opinion of the judge who pronounced the sentence. The Queen thus follows the counsel of a man who is counselled by the author of the act which is under examination. Briefly, the appeal in criminal cases lies from the judge to himself, and is thus almost an absurdity.

There is no law, written or unwritten, as to the tenure of the Indian

Digitized by Google

and Colonial portfolios. The power of the one and the other is more limited than the public imagines. The Indian Secretary is indeed the superior of the Viceroy; every new telegraph line between London and Calcutta must necessarily facilitate the transfer of the seat of authority from the capital of India to the capital of England. But the Secretary of State is assisted by a council of fifteen old Anglo-Indian officials; whose authority he may override, but at his peril. And few resolutions are taken in Downing Street on Indian affairs without their having been previously sanctioned by that other Cabinet which meets at the Indian Office. The Vice-President of the Indian Council at this moment is Sir Henry Rawlinson; and there are five other distinguished military men on the list. For which one may be thankful.

The Colonial Secretary's power entirely depends on the prestige of his office. Canada, Australia, and the Cape are self-governed; and the Secretary of State's functions are limited to the giving of advice and the nomination of governors who must act according to the wishes of the local parliament. But the great proconsulships are rather in the gift of the Premier than the Minister for the Colonies. It was Lord Beaconsfield who named Lord Lorne, Lord Augustus Loftus, and Sir Bartle Frere to their respective vice-royalties or dependencies. Over the "Crown Colonies" (i.e. those despotically governed), the Secretary of State has, of course, boundless authority. A recent Secretary landed one day at Heligoland from a common steamer and abolished the constitution of that interesting country. The liberties of the Heligolanders were forfeited because they could devise no better use for them than to encourage a gambling-house which threatened to rival the Monaco establishment in evil celebrity. Of course the advising (or if the term be preferred, the scolding) power of the Colonial Minister must not be undervalued. We English of the old country sometimes forget the veneration with which the English of our daughter-lands regard us. The Prime Minister of the greatest colony will listen very respectfully to any representations made by the home government, and should he refuse to act on them, his language will yet be that of a loyal subject addressing a sovereign whom he not only reveres but loves.

Perhaps the most painful part of a Premier's task in forming a new Cabinet is how to deal with the last statesman of the party who held the supreme office, should he be living. Melbourne offered Grey the Privy Seal in 1834, and was nearly kicked out of the house for his pains. Peel had no difficulties with Wellington, who, of his own initiative, surrendered the first place to his younger colleague. Melbourne was quietly overlooked in '46, when Lord John stepped into his place. Lord John's turn came in '68, when Mr. Gladstone gently but earnestly elbowed him out. Lord John, with some wit and not less assurance, described this ejection from the front door as an honourable retreat on his part. Unfortunately he spoilt the effect by publishing an elaborately studied snarl at his supplanter some years later.

You must be a Cæsar to fall with dignity.

Digitized by Google

White Wings: A Yachting Romance.

CHAPTER XXXV.

To Absent Friends!

NEXT morning, however, every one perceived an extraordinary change in the appearance and manner of the girl. Mary Avon had come back to us again, with all the light and life of her face, and the contented gentleness of the soft black eyes. What had wrought the transformation? Certain confidential assurances in the silence of the night that Angus Sutherland, so far from not forgiving her, had insisted that she was not to blame at all. Or the natural reaction after a long strain of anxiety? Or merely the welcome fresh breeze of the morning, with the cheerful, wooded shores, and the white houses shining in the sunlight? Anyhow there was quite a new expression in her face; and we heard the low, sweet laugh again. It is true that, once or twice, as she walked up and down the deck with the Laird, her eyes grew pensive as she looked away along the hills on the southern shores of the loch. That was the direction in which Angus had left in the morning. And these hills were somewhat overcast; it seemed to be raining inland.

Moreover, there was something else to make our breakfast party a glad one. The two men who had rowed our young Doctor across the loch at break of day had had the curiosity to pierce inland as far as the village of Clachan; and the scouts had brought back the most glowing accounts of the Promised Land which they had discovered. They had penetrated a fertile and deeply-wooded valley; and they had at length

Digitized by Google

THE LADIES PRODUCED THEIR KNITTING MATERIALS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

come upon a centre of the highest civilisation. There was a post office. There was a telegraph office. There was a church, the clock of which struck the hours.

"Just fancy that!" exclaimed our hostess. "A clock that strikes the hours!—and a telegraph office! We might send a telegram to ask whether the country has been invaded anywhere, or whether the Prime Minister has committed suicide."

"I would like to hear about the steam fire-engine," said the Laird, almost to himself.

"However, breeze or no breeze, seals or no seals," she says, with decision, "we must stay over a day here, to have the yacht thoroughly provisioned. We cannot go on skating on the edge of tinned meats. We must have a plentiful supply of fresh vegetables, and fresh milk, and eggs and butter; and then two or three joints are always so serviceable—cold, I mean, for luncheon; and if Fred cannot get any game, at least he must get us some fowls. What do you say, Mary? Shall we walk over to this place, and clear the way for Fred?"

"Oh, no!" says the other, lightly; "you and I are going with the seal shooters. They never get near anything; so we cannot be in the way. I assure you, sir, we shall be as quiet as mice," she adds, addressing the Laird.

"Ye will come with us, and ye will speak just as much as ye please," said the Laird, dogmatically. "What signifies a seal? The crayture is good for nothing! And the idea of you two going away by yourselves into the country! No—no; come away and get ready, Howard. If ye cannot shoot a seal with the two leddies in the boat, ye will never do it without. And the sea breezes, Miss Mary," he added, with an approving air, "are better for ye than the land breezes. Oh, aye; ye are looking just fine this morning."

A short time thereafter he was on deck, looking around him at the pleasant trees and the blue waters, when Miss Avon joined him, fully equipped for the expedition; and just at this moment they began to hear a sound of music in the stillness of the morning air. And then they perceived a rude old rowing-boat, pulled by a small boy of twelve or so, coming nearer and nearer; while another small boy of about the same age was peacefully reclining in the stern, his head thrown back so that it met the full glare of the morning sun, while he played vigorously but rather inaccurately "The Campbells are coming" on a tin whistle.

"Look at that!" said the Laird, with delight; "is not that perfect happiness? Look at his pride and laziness—having another boy to pull him about, while he shows off on the penny whistle. Dear me, I wish I was that young rascal!"

"He seems happy enough," she said, with a sigh.

"That is because he does not know it," remarked the Laird, profoundly. "If you proved to him that he was happy, it would immediately vanish."

Digitized by Google

"You cannot be consciously happy; but you may be consciously unhappy—that is rather hard," said she, absently.

However, these two philosophers were withdrawn from this occult point by a summons from the Youth, who had already got the rifles and cartridges into the bow of the gig. And, indeed, as we rowed away from the yacht, in the direction of the rocks at the mouth of the loch, Miss Avon seemed determined to prove that, consciously or unconsciously, she was happy enough. She would not even allow that Angus Sutherland could have felt any pang of regret at leaving the *White Dove* and his friends.

"Poor chap!" said the Laird, with some compassion, as he turned his head and looked away towards those gloomy hills; "it must have been a lonesome journey for him this morning. And he so fond of sailing, too; I'm thinking when he saw what a nice breeze there was, he was rather sorry to go away. I should not wonder if it was wi' a heavy heart that he went on board the steamer."

"Oh, no, sir! why should you think that?" said Mary Avon, quickly and anxiously. "If Dr. Sutherland had nothing to consider but yachting, he might have been sorry to go away. But think what lies before him; think what calls him! Look at the position he has won for himself already, and what is expected of him! and you would have him throw away his splendid opportunities in yachting? There is not a University in Europe where he is not known; there is not a man of science in Europe who does not expect great things of him; and—and—how proud his father must be of him!"

She spoke eagerly and almost breathlessly; there was a pink flush in her cheek, but it was not from shamefacedness. She seemed desperately anxious to convince the Laird that our Doctor ought to have left the yacht, and must have left the yacht, and could not do anything else but leave the yacht. Meanwhile, her friend and hostess regarded her curiously.

"A man with such capacities as he has," continued the girl, warmly, "with such a great future before him, owes it to himself that he should not give way to mere sentiment. The world could not get on at all if people—I mean if the great people, from whom we expect much—were always to be consulting their feelings. Perhaps he was sorry to leave the yacht. He does like sailing; and—and I think he liked to be among friends. But what is that when he knows there is work in the world for him to do? If he was sorry at leaving the yacht, you may depend on it that that had passed away before he stepped on board the steamer. For what was that trifling sentiment compared with the consciousness that he had acted rightly?"

Something about the precision of these phrases—for the girl but rarely gave way to such a fit of earnest talking—seemed to suggest to the silent person who was watching her, that this was not the first time the girl had thought of these things.

Digitized by Google

"Idle people," said this youthful controversialist, "can afford to indulge in sentiment; but not those who have to do great things in the world. And it is not as if—Dr. Sutherland"—she always faltered the least bit just before pronouncing the name—"were only working for his own fame or his own wealth. It is for the good of mankind that he is working; and if he has to make this or that sacrifice, he knows that he is doing right. What other reward does a man need to have?"

"I am thinking of the poor old man in Banffshire," said her friend to her, thoughtfully. "If Angus goes away to Italy for some years, they may not see each other again."

At this the girl turned strangely pale, and remained silent; but she was unnoticed, for at this moment all attention was attracted towards the seals.

There they were, no doubt, and in large numbers. We could see the occasionally moving forms, scarcely distinguishable from the brown sea-weed, on the long projecting points of the low rocks; while here and there one of the animals could be made out, poising himself in a semi-circle—head and tail in the air—like the letter O with the upper four-fifths cut off. But the problem was, how to get anywhere within shot. The rocks, or small islands, had no doubt certain eminences in the middle; but they were low and shallow all round. Obviously it was no use bearing straight down on them from our present position; so it was resolved to give them a wide berth, to pull away from the islands altogether, and then approach them from the south, if haply there might in this wise be some possibility of shelter. It was observed that Queen Titania, during these whispered and eager consultations, smiled gravely and was silent. She had been in the Highlands before.

Seals are foolish animals. We were half a mile away from them; and we were going still farther away. The rocking of the water made it impossible for us to try a haphazard shot, even if we had had a rifle that would have carried anything like 800 yards with precision. There was not the least reason for their being alarmed. But all the same, as we silently and slowly paddled away from them—actually away from them—the huge bodies one by one flopped and waddled, and dropped into the water with a splash. In about a minute or so there was not a seal visible through our best binoculars. And Queen Titania calmly smiled.

But, as everybody knows, there are two sides to an island, as to everything else. So we boldly bore down on the shores nearest us, and resolved, on getting near, on a cautious and silent landing. After many a trial we found a creek where the stern of the gig could be backed into fairly deep water, along a ledge of rock, and then two of us got out. The ladies produced their knitting materials.

With much painful stooping and crawling, we at length reached the middle ridge, and there laid down our rifles to have a preliminary peep round. That stealthy glance revealed the fact that, on the other side

Digitized by Google

also, the seals had been alarmed and had left the rocks; but still they were not far away. We could see here and there a black and glistening head moving among the lapping waters. Of course it would have been madness to have risked our all on a random shot at sea. Hit or miss, the chances were about equal we should not get the seal; so we quietly retired again behind the ridge, and sate down. We could see the gig and its occupants. It seemed to one of us at least that Queen Titania was still amused.

A dead silence: while we idly regard the washed-up stores of sea shells around us, and patiently await the return of the seals to the rocks. Then a sudden noise that makes one's heart jump: a couple of terns have discovered us, and the irate birds go wheeling and shrieking overhead with screams that would have aroused the Sleeping Beauty and all her household. In their fright and wrath they come nearer and nearer; at times they remain motionless overhead; but ever continues the shrill and piercing shriek. The face of the Youth is awful to see. Again and again he puts up his rifle; and there is no doubt that, if he were to fire, he might accomplish that feat which is more frequently heard of in novels than elsewhere—shooting a bird on the wing with a rifle. But then he is loth to throw away his last chance. With a gesture of despair, he lowers his weapon, and glances towards the gig. Queen Titania has caught his eye, and he hers. She is laughing.

At length we venture to hazard everything. Furtively each rifle is protruded over the ledge of rock; and furtively each head creeps up by the stock, the hand on the trigger-guard. The caution is unnecessary. There is not a sign of any living thing all around the shores. Even the two sea-swallows, alarmed by our moving, have wheeled away into the distance; we are left in undisturbed possession of the island. Then the Youth clambers up to the top of the rocks and looks around. A skart, perched on a far ledge, immediately takes flight—striking the water with his heavy wings before he can get well on his way: thereafter a dead silence.

"It was the tern that did that," says the Youth, moodily, as we return to the gig. "The seals must have known well enough."

"They generally do contrive to know somehow," is the answer of one who is not much disappointed, and who is still less surprised.

But this wicked woman all a-laughing, when we return to the gig!

"Come, children," says she, "we shall barely be back in time for lunch; and we shall be all the longer that Angus is not here to sing his '*Ho, ro, clansmen!*' But the quicker the sooner, as the Highlandman said. Jump in!"

"It was all owing to those sea-swallows," remarks the Youth, gloomily.

"Never mind," says she, with great equanimity. "Mary and I knew you would not shoot anything, or we should not have come. Let us hasten back to see what Fred has shot for us, with his silver sixpences."

Digitized by Google

And so we tumble into the gig; and push away, and have a long swinging pull back to the *White Dove*.

There is still some measure of justice meted out upon the earth. The face of this fiend who has been laughing at us all the morning becomes a trifle more anxious when she draws near the yacht. For there is Master Fred idling up at the bow, instead of being below looking after the vast stores he has got on board; and moreover as we draw near, and as he comes along to the gangway, any one can perceive that our good Frederick d'or is not in a facetious frame of mind.

"Well, Fred, have you got a good supply at last?" she cries, taking hold of the rope, and putting her foot on the step.

Fred mumbles something in reply.

"What have you got?" she says, when she is on deck. "Any game?"

"No, mem."

"Oh, never mind; the fowls will do very well."

Fred is rather silent, until he explains that he could not get any fowls.

"No fowls? What butcher's meat, then?" says she, somewhat indignantly.

"None."

"None? Nothing?" says she; and a low titter begins to prevail among the assembled crowd. "Have you not got a joint of any sort?"

Fred is almost unwilling to confess—he is ashamed, angry, disconcerted. At last he blurts out—

"I could get nothing at all, mem, but fower loaves."

At this there was a roar of laughter. What had become of all her fresh milk, and butter, and eggs; her mutton, and fowls, and cutlets; her grouse, and snipe, and hares? We did not care for our privation; we only rejoiced in her discomfiture.

"That is just like a Scotch village," says she, savagely; "spending all its money on a church bell, and not able to keep a decent shop open! Do you mean to say you could not get a carrot, or a cabbage, or a pennyworth of milk?"

"No, mem."

"John," she says, in a domineering way, "why *don't* you get the sails up? What is the use of staying in a place like this?"

John comes forward timidly, and stroking his great beard: he half believes in these furious rages of hers.

"Oh, yes, mem, if ye please, mem, I will get the sail set—but—but the tide will be turning soon, mem, and the wind, she will be against us as soon as we get out of the loch; and it will be a long, long time before we get to Crinan. I not well aquent with this place, mem: if we were up in our own part of the Highlands, do you think the people would let the *White Dove* be so long without the fresh cabbage and the milk? No; I not think that, mem."

Digitized by Google

"But we are not in our own part of the Highlands," says she, querulously; "and do you think we are going to starve? However, I suppose Fred can give us a biscuit. Let us go below."

Our lunch was, in truth, simple enough; but perhaps it was this indirect appeal to Fred that determined that worthy to surprise us at dinner that evening. First of all, after we had returned from another ineffectual seal hunt, we found he had decorated the dinner-table in an elaborate manner. There was a clean cloth, shining with the starch in it. There was a great dish of scarlet rowans in the middle of the table; and the rowans had a border of white heather—gathered at Loch-na-Chill: the rowans were for lovely colour, the heather was for luck. Then, not content with that, he had put all our available silver on the table, including the candlesticks and the snuffer tray, though the sun had not yet sunk behind the Jura hills. But the banquet defies description. The vast basin of steaming kidney soup, the boiled lithe, the fried mackerel, the round of tongue, the corned beef, the tomatoes, the pickles, the sardines, the convolutions of pudding and apricot jam: what Fishmonger or Drysalter or Gunmaker could have wanted more? Nor was there any Apemantus at the feast; there was the smiling and benign countenance of the Laird, who again and again made facetious remarks about the kirk bell of Clachan. Then he said more formally—

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am going to ask ye to drink a toast."

"Oh, uncle!" said the Youth, deprecatingly; "we are not at a commissioners' meeting at Strathgovan."

"And I will thank ye to fill your glasses," said the Laird, taking no heed of Young England and his modern want of manners. "I have to ask ye, ladies and gentlemen, to drink the health of one who is an old and valued friend of some of us, who is admired and respected by us all. It would ill become us, now that he has been separated from us but by a day, that we should forget him in his absence. We have come in close contact with him; we have seen his fine qualities of temper and character; and I am sure no one present will contradict me when I say that, great as are his abeelities, they are not more remarkable thau his modesty, and his good humour, and his simple, plain, frank ways. With a man of less solid judgment, I might be afraid of certain dangerous tendencies of these times; but our friend has a Scotch head on his shoulders; he may be dazzled by their newfangled speculations, but not convinced—not convinced. It is a rare thing—I will say it, though I am but a recent acquaintance, and do not know him as well as some now at this hospitable board—to find such powers of intellect united with such a quiet and unassuming manliness. Ladies and gentlemen, I give ye the health of Dr. Angus Sutherland. We regret that he has gone from us; but we know that duty calls, and we honour the man who stands to his guns. It may be that we may see him in these waters once more; it may be that we may not; but whatever may be in store for him or for us, we

Digitized by Google

know he will be worthy of the hopes we build on him, and we drink his health now in his absence, and wish him God-speed!"

"Hear! hear!" cried the Youth, who was greatly amused by this burst of old-fashioned eloquence. But Mary Avon sate white and trembling, and quite forgot to put the glass to her lips. It was her hostess who spoke next, with a laugh.

"I think, sir," said she, "I might give you a hint. If you were to go up on deck and ask the men whether they would like to drink Angus's health, I don't think they would refuse."

"It is a most capital suggestion," said the Laird, rising to take down his wide-awake.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Suspicions.

It was handsomely done on the part of the Laird to pay that tribute to his vanquished and departed enemy. But next morning, as we were getting under weigh, he got a chance of speaking to his hostess alone; and he could not quite forego a little bit of boasting over his superior astuteness and prescience.

"What did I say, ma'am," he asked, with a confident chuckle, "when ye made a communication to me on the subject of our friend who has just left us? Did I not offer to make ye a wager, though I am but little of a gambler? A gold ring, a sixpence, and a silver thimble: did I not offer to wager ye these three articles that your guesses were not quite correct? And what has become of Dr. Sutherland now?"

His hostess is not in this gay humour. She answers with a touch of reserve—

"If I made any mistake, it was about Mary. And I had no right to suspect anything, for she never took me into her confidence; and I do not approve of elderly people prying into the affairs of young people."

"Pry?" says the Laird, loftily and graciously. "No, no; no prying. But judgment?—is there any harm in one keeping one's eyes open? And did not I tell ye, ma'am, to be of good heart—that everything would go properly and smoothly?"

"And has it?" she says, sharply, and looking up with a glance of indignation.

The Laird, however, is so wrapped up in his own thoughts that he does not notice this protest.

"She *is* a fine lass, that," he says, with decision. "Did ye ever hear a young girl speak such clear common sense as she spoke yesterday, about that very Doctor? There is no affected sentiment—there is nothing of your Clarinda and Philander noavel-writing—about that lass: did ye ever hear such good, sound, clear common sense?"

Digitized by Google

"I heard her," says his hostess, shortly.

By this time we had weighed anchor, and the *White Dove* was slowly sailing down the loch, before a light northerly breeze. Then Mary Avon came on deck, followed by the attentive Youth. And while everybody on board was eagerly noticing things ahead—the seals on the rocks at the mouth of the loch, the windy grey sea beyond, and the blue mountains of Jura—Mary Avon alone looked backward, to the low lines of hills we were leaving. She sate silent and apart.

The Laird stepped over to her.

"We have just been talking about the Doctor," says he, cheerfully. "And we were saying there was plenty of good common sense in what ye said yesterday about his duties and his prospects. Oh, aye! But then, ye ken, Miss Mary, even the busiest and the wisest of men must have their holiday at times; and I have just been thinking that, if we can get Dr. Sutherland to come with us next year, we will, maybe, surprise him by what ye can do wi' a steam yacht. Why, during the time we have been lying here, we might have run across to Ireland and back in a steam yacht! It is true there would be less enjoyment for him in the sailing; but still there are compensations."

His hostess has overheard all this. She says, in her gentle way, but with a cold and cruel clearness—

"You know, sir, that is quite impossible. Angus will not be in Scotland for many a day to come."

The girl's face is hidden; apparently she is still gazing back on those slowly receding hills.

"Toots! toots!" says the Laird, briskly. "The lad is not a fool. He will make an occasion if he considers it desirable: there is no compulsion that he must remain in Eetaly. I think I would even lay a wager that we will have just the same party, and the Doctor included, on that steam yacht next year, and in this very place: is it a wager, ma'am?"

"I am afraid you must leave us out," she remarks, "at all events. And as for Angus Sutherland, I shall be surprised if ever he sees West Loch Tarbert again."

Why had not Mary Avon spoken? The Laird went a step nearer her, and put his hand gently on her shoulder.

"Well, Miss Mary," said he; "what are we to do to show these people their folly and wickedness—eh? I think I will leave it to you."

"Oh, no, sir!" This, or something like this, she was understood to say, in a low voice; but at the same moment she rose quickly, crossed the deck, put a trembling hand on the companion way, and went below. Just as she disappeared, she could not quite conceal her face; and there was a look on it that startled the Laird. Had the girl been stealthily crying all the time she had been looking back at those distant hills?

The Laird was greatly disturbed. He said nothing, for he would not have it understood that anything had happened; but any one could see

Digitized by Google

by his preoccupied manner that he was seriously troubled. He had directed a quick, sharp glance of surprise and inquiry at his hostess; but just then she was stepping aside to get out of the way of Captain John. The Laird sate down by himself, and remained in a profound silence. He seemed to pay no attention to what was going on.

But there was brisk work enough all over the yacht. For now we had got clear of the long promontory and its islands; and out here in the open there was a pretty heavy sea running, while the wind began to freshen up a bit. There was a squally look about the sea and sky; it was considered prudent to lower the topsail. Now and again there was a heavy shock at the bows, and then a dipping of heads to dodge the flying shreds of spray. In the midst of all this Miss Avon appeared again.

"I thought we should catch it," said she, in the blithest of tones; and she addressed herself particularly to the Laird. "And it is better to be prepared. But, oh dear me! what a nuisance a waterproof is!"

And indeed the wind was blowing that hooded and caped garment all about her head, so that her dark hair was becoming considerably dishevelled. The Youth came to her assistance; put a cushion and a shawl for her just beside her hostess, under the lee of the weather bulwarks; then she snugly ensconced herself there, and seemed to be very merry and happy indeed.

"Don't you often wish you were a fish, when the weather is wet?" she says, gaily, to her friend; "so that you might be perfectly indifferent?" And here she cries "Oh!" again, because a drop or two of spray has come flying past the keel of the gig and just caught her on the crown of her waterproof.

Nothing can exceed her talk, her laughter, her cheerfulness. She nestles close to her friend; she is like a spoiled child; she makes fun of the Youth's attempts to steer. And the Laird is regarding her with a grave wonder—perhaps with some dark suspicion—when she lightly addresses herself to him again:—

"But what about that strong man, sir? You were going to tell us the story yesterday, when you were interrupted."

It was a cunning device. How could a professed story-teller refuse to rise to the bait? The watchfulness disappeared from the face of the Laird: in its place a sort of anticipatory laughter began to shine.

"But it was Tom Galbraith heard of that man," said he, in a deprecating way. "Did I not tell ye? Oh, aye! it was Tom Galbraith heard of him when he was in Ross-shire; and it was he told me of the wonderful things that man could do, according to the natives. Did not I tell ye of his rolling an enormous stone up a hill, and of the stone being split into nine pieces; yet not any one man could roll up one of the nine pieces? But I was going to tell ye of his being in Prince's Street, Edinburgh; and a coach and four was coming whirling along; the horses had run away, and no one could stop them. M'Kinlay was walking along the street, when the people called to him to look out, for

Digitized by Google

the four horses were running mad; but the Ross-shire Samson was not afraid. No, no——"

Here a wisp of spray somewhat disconcerted the Laird; but only for a moment. He wiped the salt water from the side of his neck, and continued, with suppressed laughter bubbling up in his eyes.

"The man that told Tom Galbraith," said he, "was a solemn believer, and spoke with reverence. 'M'Kinlay,' says he, 'he will turn to the street, and he will grab at the four horses and the coach, and he will took them up in his two hands—*shist like a mice.*'"

"*Shist like a mice.*" The Laird preserved a stern silence. The humour of this story was so desperately occult that he would leave the coarse applause to us. Only there was an odd light in his eyes; and we knew that it was all he could do to prevent his bursting out into a roar of laughter. But Mary Avon laughed—until John of Skye, who had not heard a word, grinned out of pure sympathy.

"He must have been the man," said Miss Avon, diffidently—for she did not like to encroach on the Laird's province—"whom Captain John told me about, who could drink whisky so strong that a drop of it would burn a white mark on a tarred rope."

But the Laird was not jealous.

"Very good—very good!" he cried, with extreme delight. "Excellent—a real good one! 'Deed I'll tell that to Tom Galbraith!"

And the high spirits and the facetiousness of these two children continued through lunch. That was rather a wild meal, considering that we were still sawing across the boisterous Sound of Jura, in the teeth of a fresh northerly breeze. However, nothing could exceed the devotion of the Youth, who got scarcely any luncheon at all in his efforts to control the antics of pickle jars and to bolster up bottles. Then when everything was secure, there would be an ominous call overhead, "*Stand by forrard, boys!*" followed by a period of frantic revolution and panic.

"Yes," continued the Laird, when we got on deck again; "a sense of humour is a great power in human affairs. A man in public life without it is like a ship without a helm: he is sure to go and do something redeeclous that a smaller man would have avoided altogether. Aye, my father's sense of humour was often said by people to be quite extraordinar'—quite extraordinar'. I make no pretensions that way maself."

Here the Laird waved his hand, as if to deprecate any courteous protest.

"No, no; I have no pretensions that way; but sometimes a bit joke comes in verra well when ye are dealing with solemn and pretentious asses. There is one man in Strathgovan——"

But here the Laird's contempt of this dull person could not find vent in words. He put up both hands, palm outwards, and shook them, and shrugged his shoulders.

"A most desperately stupid ass, and as loquacious as a parrot. I

Digitized by Google

mind fine when I was giving my earnest attention to the subject of our police system. I may tell ye, ma'am, that our burgh stretches over about a mile each way, and that it has a population of over 8,000 souls, with a vast quantity of valuable property. And up till that time we had but two policemen on duty at the same time during the night. It was my opeenion that that number was quite inahdequate; and I stated my opeenion at a meeting of the Commissioners convened for that purpose. Well, would ye believe it, this meddlesome body, Johnny Guthrie, got up on his legs and preached and preached away; and all that he had to tell us was that we could not add to the number of police without the consent of the Commissioners of Supply and the Home Secretary. Bless me! what bairn is there but knows that? I'll be bound Miss Mary there, though she comes from England, would know as much about public affairs as that?"

"I—I am afraid not, sir," said she.

"No matter—no matter. Live and learn. When ye come to Strathgovan, we'll begin and teach ye. However, as I was sayin', this bletherin' poor crayture went on and on, and it was all about the one point, until I got up and, 'Mr. Provost,' says I, 'there are some human beings it would be idle to answer. Their loquacity is a sort of function; they perspire through their tongue—like a doag.' Ye should have seen Johnny Guthrie's face after that!"

And here the Laird laughed and laughed again at Johnny Guthrie's discomfiture.

"But he was a poor bletherin' crayture," he continued, with a kind of compassion. "Providence made him what he is: but sometimes I think Johnny tries to make himself even more rideeklous than Providence could fairly and honestly have intended. He attacked me most bitterly because I got a committee appointed to represent to the Postmaster that we should have a later delivery at night. He attacked me most bitterly; and yet I think it was one of the greatest reforms ever introduced into our Burgh."

"Oh, indeed, sir?" says his hostess, with earnest attention.

"Yes, indeed. The Postmaster is a most civil, worthy, and respectable man, though it was a sore blow to him when his daughter took to going to the Episcopal Church in Glasgow. However, with his assistance we now get the letters that used to be delivered in the forenoon delivered late the night before; and we have a mail made up at 10 P.M., which is a great convenience. And that man Johnny Guthrie gabbling away as if the French Revolution were coming back on us! I am a Conservative myself, as ye know, ma'am; but I say that we must march with the times. No standing still in these days. However, ye will get Johnny Guthries everywhere; poor bletherin' craytures who have no capacity for taking a large view of public affairs—bats and blindworms as it were: I suppose there is a use for them, as it has pleased Providence to create them; but it would puzzle an ordinary person to find it out."

Digitized by Google

With much of the like wise discourse did the Laird beguile our northward voyage; and apparently he had forgotten that little incident about Mary Avon in the morning. The girl was as much interested as any one; laughed at the "good ones;" was ready to pour her contempt on the Johnny Guthries who opposed the projects of the Laird's statesmanship. And in this manner we fought our way against the stiff northerly breeze, until evening found us off the mouth of Loch Crinan. Here we proposed to run in for the night, so that we should have daylight and a favourable tide to enable us to pass through the Doruis Mohr.

It was a beautiful, quiet evening in this sheltered bay; and after dinner we were all on deck, reading, smoking, and what not. The Laird and Mary Avon were playing chess together. The glow of the sunset was still in the western sky, and reflected on the smooth water around us; though Jura and Scarba were of a dark, soft, luminous rose-purple.

Chess is a silent game; the Laird was not surprised that his companion did not speak to him. And so absorbed was he with his knights and bishops that he did not notice that, in the absolute silence of this still evening, one of the men forward was idly whistling to himself the sad air of Lochaber.

Lochaber no more! And Lochaber no more!
We'll maybe return to Lochaber no more!

It was the old and familiar refrain: Hector of Moidart was probably not thinking of Lochaber at all.

But suddenly the Laird, staring down at the board, perceived some little tiny thing drop on the farther edge from him; and he quickly looked up. The girl was crying. Instantly he put out his great hand and took hers, and said, in a low voice, full of gentleness and a tender sympathy—

"Dear me, lassie, what is the matter?"

But Mary Avon hastily pulled out her handkerchief, and passed it across her eyes, and said hurriedly—

"Oh, I beg your pardon! it is nothing: I—I was thinking of something else. And is it your move or mine, sir?——"

The Laird looked at her; but her eyes were cast down. He did not pay so much attention to the game after that.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Certainty.

Next morning there is a lively commotion on board. The squally, blustering-looking skies, the glimpses of the white horses out there on the driven green sea, and the fresh northerly breeze that comes in gusts

Digitized by Google

and swirls about the rigging—all tell us that we shall have some hard work before we pierce the Doruis Mohr.

"You won't want for wind to-day, Captain John," says the Youth, who is waiting to give the men a hand at the windlass.

"'Deed, no," says John of Skye, with a grim smile. "This is the kind of day that Dr. Sutherland would like, and the *White Dove* going through the Doruis Mohr, too!"

However, the Laird seems to take no interest in what is going forward. All the morning he has been silent and preoccupied; occasionally approaching his hostess, but never getting an opportunity of speaking with her alone. At last, when he observes that every one is on deck, and eagerly watching the *White Dove* getting under weigh, he covertly and quietly touches our Admiral on the arm.

"I would speak to ye below for a moment, ma'am," he says, in a whisper.

And so, unnoticed amid all this bustle, she follows him down into the saloon, wondering not a little. And as soon as he has shut the door he plunges *in medias res.*

"I beg your pardon, ma'am; but I must speak to ye. It is about your friend, Miss Mary: have ye not observed that she is sorely troubled about something—though she puts a brave face on it and will not acknowledge it? Have ye not seen it—have ye not guessed that she is grievously troubled about some matter or other?"

"I have guessed it," said the other.

"Poor lass! poor lass!" said the Laird; and then he added, thoughtfully, "It is no small matter that can affect so light-hearted a creature: that is what I want to ask ye. Do ye know? Have ye guessed? Surely it is something that some of us can help her wi'. Indeed, it just distresses me beyond measure to see that trouble in her face; and when I see her try to conceal it—and to make believe that everything is well with her—I feel as if there was nothing I would not do for the poor lass."

"But I don't think either you or I can help. Young people must manage their affairs for themselves," says his hostess, somewhat coldly.

"But what is it?—what is it? What is troubling her?"

Queen Titania regards him for a moment, apparently uncertain as to how far she should go. At last she says—

"Well; I am not revealing any confidence of Mary's; for she has told me nothing about it. But I may as well say at once that when we were in West Loch Tarbert, Dr. Sutherland asked her to be his wife; and she refused him. And now I suppose she is breaking her heart about it."

"Dear me! dear me!" says the Laird, with eyes open wide.

"It is always the way with girls," says the other, with a cruel cynicism. "Whether they say 'Yes' or 'No' they are sure to cry over it. And naturally; for whether they say 'Yes' or 'No' they are sure to have made an irretrievable blunder."

Digitized by Google

The Laird is slowly recovering from his first shock of surprise.

"But if she did refuse him, surely that is what any one would have expected? There is nothing singular in that."

"Pardon me; I think there is something very singular," she says, warmly. "I don't see how any one could have been with these two up in the north, and not perceived that there was an understanding between them. If any girl ever encouraged a man, she did. Why, sir, when you proposed that your nephew should come with us, and make love to Mary, I said 'Yes' because I thought it would be merely a joke! I thought he would please you by consenting, and not harm anybody else. But now it has turned out quite different; and Angus Sutherland has gone away."

And at this there was a return of the proud and hurt look into her eyes: Angus was her friend; she had not expected this idle boy would have supplanted him.

The Laird was greatly disturbed. The beautiful picture that he had been painting for himself during this summer idleness of ours—filling in the details with a lingering and loving care—seemed to fade away into impalpable mist; and he was confronted by blank chaos. And this, too, just at the moment when the departure of the Doctor appeared to render all his plans doubly secure.

He rose.

"I will think over it, ma'am," he said, slowly. "I am obliged to ye for your information: perhaps I was not as observant as I should have been."

Then she sought to stay him for a moment.

"Don't you think, sir," said she, timidly, "it would be better for neither you nor me to interfere?"

The Laird turned.

"I made a promise to the lass," said he, quite simply, "one night we were in Loch Leven, and she and I were walking on the deck, that when she was in trouble I would try to help her; and I will not break my promise through any fear of being called an intermeddler. I will go to the girl myself—when I have the opportunity; and if she prefers to keep her own counsel—if she thinks I am only an old Scotch fool who should be minding my own business—I will not grumble."

And again he was going away, when again she detained him.

"I hope you do not think I spoke harshly of Mary," said she, penitentially. "I own that I was a little disappointed. And it seemed so certain. But I am sure she has sufficient reason for whatever she has done—and that she believes she is acting rightly——"

"Of that there is no doubt," said he, promptly. "The girl has just a wonderful clear notion of doing what she ought to do; and nothing would make her flinch." Then he added, after a second, "But I will think over it; and then go to herself. Perhaps she feels lonely, and does not know that there is a home awaiting her at Denny-mains."

Digitized by Google

So both of them went on deck again; and found that the *White Dove* was already sailing away from the Trossachs-like shores of Loch Crinan, and getting farther out into this squally green sea. There were bursts of sunlight flying across the rocks and the white-tipped waves; but ordinarily the sky was overcast, masses of grey and silvery cloud coming swinging along from the north.

Then the Laird showed himself discreet "before folk." He would not appear to have any designs on Mary Avon's confidences. He talked in a loud and confident fashion to John of Skye, about the weather, and the Doruis Mohr, and Corrievrechan. Finally, he suggested, in a facetious way, that as the younger men had occasionally had their turn at the helm, he might have his now, for the first time.

"If ye please, sir," said Captain John, relinquishing the tiller to him with a smile of thanks, and going forward to have a quiet pipe.

But the Laird seemed a little bit confused by the rope which John had confided to him. In a light breeze, and with his hand on the tiller, he might have done very well; but this looped rope, to which he had to cling so as to steady himself, seemed puzzling. And almost at the same time the *White Dove* began to creep up to the wind; and presently the sails showed an ominous quiver.

"Keep her full, sir!" called John of Skye, turning round.

But instead of that the sails flapped more and more; there was a rattling of blocks; two men came tumbling up from the forecastle, thinking the yacht was being put about.

"Shove your hand from ye, sir!" called out the skipper to the distressed steersman; and this somewhat infantine direction soon put the vessel on her course again.

In a few minutes thereafter John of Skye put his pipe in his waistcoat pocket.

"We'll let her about now, sir," he called to the Laird.

The two men who happened to be on deck went to the jib-sheets; John himself leisurely proceeding to stand by the weather fore-sheet. Then, as the Laird seemed still to await further orders, he called out—

"Helm hard down, sir, if ye please!"

But this rope bothered the Laird. He angrily untwisted it, let it drop on the deck, and then with both hands endeavoured to jam the tiller towards the weather bulwarks, which were certainly nearer to him than the lee bulwarks.

"The other way, sir!" Mary Avon cried to him, anxiously.

"Bless me! bless me! Of course!" he cried, in return; and then he let the tiller go, and just managed to get out of its way as it swung to leeward. And then as the bow sheered round, and the *White Dove* made away for the mouth of Loch Craignish on the port tack, he soon discovered the use of the weather tiller rope, for the wind was now blowing hard, and the yacht pitching a good deal.

"We are getting on, Miss Mary!" he cried to her, crushing his

Digitized by Google

wideawake down over his forehead. "Have ye not got a bit song for us? What about the two sailors that pitied all the poor folk in London?"

She only cast down her eyes, and a faint colour suffused her cheeks: our singing-bird had left us.

"Howard, lad!" the Laird called out again, in his facetious manner, "ye are not looking well, man. Is the pitching too much for you?"

The Youth was certainly not looking very brilliant; but he managed to conjure up a ghastly smile.

"If I get ill," said he, "I will blame it on the steering."

"'Deed, ye will not," said the Laird, who seemed to have been satisfied with his performances. "I am not going to steer this boat through the Doruis Mohr. Here, John, come back to your post!"

John of Skye came promptly aft; in no case would he have allowed an amateur to pilot the *White Dove* through this narrow strait with its swirling currents. However, when the proper time came we got through the Doruis Mohr very easily, there being a strong flood tide to help us; and the brief respite under the lee of the land allowed the Youth to summon back his colour and his cheerfulness.

The Laird had ensconced himself beside Mary Avon; he had a little circle of admiring listeners; he was telling us, amid great shouts of laughter, how Homesh had replied to one tourist, who had asked for something to eat, that that was impossible, "bekass ahl the plates was cleaned;" and how Homesh had answered another tourist, who represented that the towel in the lavatory was not as it should be, that "more than fifty or sixty people was using that towel this very day, and not a complaint from any one of them;" and how Homesh, when his assistant stumbled and threw a leg of mutton on to the deck, called out to him in his rage, "Ye young teffle, I will knock the stairs down your head!" We were more and more delighted with Homesh and his apocryphal adventures.

But now other things than Homesh were claiming our attention. Once through the Douris, we found the wind blowing harder than ever, and a heavy sea running. The day had cleared, and the sun was gleaming on the white crests of the waves; but the air was thick with whirled spray, and the decks were running wet. The *White Dove* listed over before the heavy wind, so that her scuppers were a foot deep in water; while opening the gangway only relieved the pressure for a second or two; the next moment a wave would surge in on the deck. The jib and fore staysail were soaked half mast high. When we were on the port tack the keel of the gig ploughed the crests of those massive and rolling waves. This would, indeed, have been a day for Angus Sutherland.

On one tack we ran right over to Corrievrechan; but we could see no waterspouts or other symptoms of the whirling currents; we could only hear the low roar all along the Scarba coast, and watch the darting of the white foam up the face of the rocks. And then away again on the

Digitized by Google

port tack; with the women clinging desperately to the weather bulwarks, lest perchance they should swiftly glide down the gleaming decks into the hissing water that rolled along the lee scuppers. Despite the fact of their being clad from top to toe in waterproofs, their faces were streaming with the salt water; but they were warm enough, for the sun was blazing hot, and the showers of spray were like showers of gleaming diamonds.

Luncheon was of an extremely pantomimic character; until, in the midst of it, we were alarmed by hearing quick tramping overhead, and noise and shouting. The Youth was hastily bidden to leave his pickle jars, and go on deck to see what was happening. In a second or two he returned—somewhat grueful—his hair wild—his face wet.

"They are only taking in the mizen," says he; "but my cap has been knocked overboard, and I have got about a quart of water down my neck."

"It will do ye good, lad," observed the Laird, in the most heartless manner; "and I will now trouble ye to pass me the marmalade."

Patiently, all day long, we beat up against that inexorable north wind, until, in the afternoon, it veered a point or two to the east, which made an appreciable difference in our rate of progress. Then, the farther the wind veered, the more it became a land wind; and the sea abated considerably; so that long before we could make out Castle Osprey on the face of the hill, we were in fairly calm waters, with a light breeze on our starboard beam. The hot sun had dried the decks; there was a possibility of walking; some went below to prepare for going ashore.

We were returning to the world of telegrams, and letters, and newspapers; we should soon know what the Commissioners of Strathbungo were doing, and whether Johnny Guthrie had been fomenting sedition. But it was not these things that troubled the Laird. He had been somewhat meditative during the afternoon. At last, finding an occasion on which nearly everybody was below but his hostess, he said to her, in a low voice—

"The more I reflect on that matter we spoke of this morning, the more I am driven to a conclusion that I would fain avoid. It would be a sad blow to me. I have built much on the scheme I was telling ye of: perhaps it was but a toy; but old people have a fondness for their toys as well as young people."

"I don't quite understand you, sir," said the other.

"We will soon learn whether I am right," said the old Laird, with a sigh; and then he turned to her and regarded her.

"I doubt whether ye see this girl's character as clearly as I do," said he. "Gentle, and soft, and delicate as she seems to be, she is of the stuff the martyrs in former days were made of: if she believes a thing to be right, she will do it, at any cost or sacrifice. Do ye mind the first evening I met her at your house—how she sate and talked, and laughed, with her sprained ankle swollen and black all the time, just that she might not interfere with the pleasure of others?"

Digitized by Google

The Laird paused for a moment or two.

"I have been putting things together," he continued—but he did not seem proud or boastful of his perspicacity: perhaps he would rather have fought against the conclusion forced on him. "When she was up in the north, it seemed to you as if she would have married the young man Sutherland?"

"Most undoubtedly."

"The lass had her bit fortune then," said the Laird, thoughtfully. "Not much, as ye say; but it would have been an independence. It would have helped him on in the world; it would have left him free. And she is proud of what he has done, and as ambeetious as himself that he should become a great man. Aye."

The Laird seemed very anxious about the varnishing of the gig; he kept smoothing it with his forefinger.

"And when he came to her the other day—it is but a guess of mine, ma'am—she may have said to herself beforehand that she would not be a drag on him, that she would leave him free to become great and famous, that the sentiment of the moment was a trifling thing compared to what the world expected from Dr. Sutherland. Ye will not forget what she said on that point only the other day. And she may have sent him away—with her own heart just like to break. I have just been putting one or two possibeelities together, ma'am——"

The colour had forsaken the cheeks of the woman who stood by his side.

"And—and—if she was so cruel—and, and heartless—and, and monstrous—she ought to be horsewhipped!" she exclaimed, quite breathlessly, and apparently not knowing what she was saying.

But the Laird shook his head.

"Poor lass! poor lass!" he said, gently; "she has had her troubles. No doubt the loss of her bit fortune seemed a desperate thing to her; and you know her first anxiety is conteenually for other people—particularly them that have been kind to her—and that she thinks no more of herself than if she haa no feelings at all. Well, ma'am, if what I am guessing at is true—it is only a speculation o' mine, and I am far from sure; but if that is all that has to be put right, I'm thinking it might be put right. We should thank God that we are now and again able to put some small matter straight in the world."

The Laird was more busy than ever with the varnish, and he went nearer the boat. His fingers were nervous, and there was a strange, sad look in the sunken grey eyes.

"Poor lass! if that is all her trouble, it might not be difficult to help her," said he; and then he added slowly—and the woman beside him knew, rather than saw, that the sad grey eyes were somehow wet—"But I had thought to see her living at Denny-mains: it was—it was a sort of toy of my old age."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

RETURN TO the circulation desk of any
University of California Library
or to the
NORTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
Bldg. 400, Richmond Field Station
University of California
Richmond, CA 94804-4698

ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS
2-month loans may be renewed by calling
(510) 642-6753
1-year loans may be recharged by bringing books to NRLF
Renewals and recharges may be made 4 days prior to due date

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW

AUG 7 1995

20,000 (4/94)

Digitized by Google

PERIODICAL

No 712697

Cornhill magazine.

AP4
C8
v.41

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
DAVIS

3 1175 01081 0482

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google